

Platonism Unveil'd :  
OR, AN  
ESSAY  
Concerning the  
Notions and Opinions  
OF  
PLATO,

And some Antient and Modern Divines  
his Followers;

In relation to the *LOGOS*, or WORD in par-  
ticular, and the Doctrine of the Trinity in general.

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In TWO PARTS.

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#### W. T. Dwyer

# ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

**T**HE Author of this Piece (as I may say,) was stopped in the very middle of his Course; he intended to have added a third Part to the two others which were published, and in it to have examin'd what Divinity the Holy Scriptures attribute to Jesus Christ. He would have confin'd himself to what the four Evangelists acquaint us concerning it, and made it appear to the meanest Capacity, that the Ideas those Sacred Writers have given us, are very wide from such as the Antients put upon 'em, and the Moderns have espoused. But Death prevented the Execution of this Design, and hindered the Publick from reaping the Benefit of it. However if this Essay meet with the Approbation it merits, the World may be oblig'd with a Dissertation the Author has left upon the Gospel of St. John. It may be said of this excellent Man, that he was a Person of very great Penetration as well as Piety, and that he made the Study of the Holy Scriptures his greatest Entertainment. He had nothing in view but a Search after Truth, which when he had found, he embrac'd it with all his Heart; for he was incapable of betraying or disquising it, for any secular Interest whatever. This plain dealing drew upon him many Enemies, but his Patience in a manner overcame all; and the firm hopes he had of a better Life after this did always support him, under all the Tryals thro which the Calumnies and Malice of his Enemies had forc'd him. His Friends have this Comfort however, That those very Persecutors could not refuse him when alive, nor since his Death, the Elogies that his Virtues drew from 'em; and, according to the Customs of this present Age, they took care in his behalf, to distinguish the Morals from the Doctrine. The Publick will see by what is here represented to 'em, what Judgment ought to be made of the latter.

THE  
TRANSLATOR  
TO THE  
READER.

**T**HERE are several Passages in the ensuing Discourse, that are very uncommon and extraordinary, which if they should happen to be true, will be much surprizing to the World: And if they are not, the Author has (to appearance) supported them with such Authorities from Antiquity, that besides the Importance of the things themselves, it will deserve the Pains of some Learned Men to confute this Discourse, & rechaire some who have, & others who may imbibe this Author's Opinions.

*ERRATA.*

PAG. 4. Col. 2. Lin. 26. for *Love is Power*. P. 13. c. 2. l. last line one, r. in *Iudah* according to the Hebrews. P. 21. c. 1. l. 22. r. *acquir'd.* P. 36. c. 1. l. 5. dele of. P. 49. c. 1. 37. r. *dwell in him.* P. 42. c. 2. l. 29. r. *it was.* P. 49. c. 1. 4. r. *World.* P. 49. c. 2. l. 40. r. *contained.* P. 64. c. 2. l. penult. r. *however.* P. 81. c. 1. l. 20. r. *herself.*

# *Platonism Unveil'd, &c.*

## The FIRST PART.

### C H A P. I.

#### *The true Idea of the Logos.*

**G**OD dwelling in an inaccessible Light, where no one can either find or comprehend him, was yet willing to reveal himself to his Creatures, either by the way of a *Manifestation* without, or by the way of *Communication* within. To manifest himself, 1. He environs himself with a supernatural Light, whence he causeth his Voice to be heard, and declares his Will. 'Tis thence that he speaks to Angels : For being invisible by his Nature, even in reference to Angels, it is necessary, that whenever he is pleas'd to declare his Orders to these *Ministring Spirits*, he should give them some marks of his Presence in some certain Place in the Heavens, and make his Will known. This *Manifestation* is so lively and luminous, that the Eyes of Men cannot bear the Splendor of it in this mortal Life. None but the *glorified Spirits* may enjoy this Privilege in common with the Angels, and which St. Paul calls the *seeing of God face to face*. It is thus without doubt that Jesus Christ beheld him. Mr. Le Clerc

hath very well observ'd (on *Exod. 34.18*) that Moses, who had such frequent Testimonies of the Divine Favour, desir'd this as a singular advantage, that God, who us'd to shew himself in a Cloud, would vouchsafe at last to discover to him his Glory in the same manner as he doth in Heaven. But this is too much for a Mortal ; this *Glorious<sup>9</sup>* Presence is an advantage reserv'd for the Angels, as I said before. And without doubt it was in such like Splendor that he presented himself before them when he design'd to create the World, and pronounce'd these words, *Let there be Light*. At least this is the Sentiment of *Basil of Seleucia*, in his first Oration upon these words, *In the beginning God created, &c.* God said, *Let there be Light*. "The Voice was "heard, and the World produc'd. But "could not he have perform'd what he "design'd in silence, and without ut- "tering a word? Would not the Work "have obey'd the least token of his Will? "Certainly the Heaven and the Earth, "with the Waters, were already pro- "duc'd without any preceding Voice.

" But it was not so with the Light,  
 " the Voice preceded the Production.  
 " What sort of a Voice is this, and what  
 " was the cause of it? Let us learn to  
 " hearken to Scripture, even when it is  
 " silent, and instruct our selves when it  
 " speaks. Behold here you have it.  
 " The infinite Companies of Angels  
 " that were created, saw indeed the  
 " things that were a doing, but could  
 " not perceive their Author, nor disco-  
 " ver the Cause (for the Divine Essence  
 " is really even above the Contemplation  
 " of Angels.) 'Tis not then without  
 " reason that God usher'd in his Voice,  
 " to make himself sensible to those Ce-  
 " lestial Spirits, and to stir up their  
 " admiration; that seeing the Effect fol-  
 " low'd immediately the Word and Com-  
 " mand, they being astonish'd at the  
 " Prodigy, should turn themselves whol-  
 " ly to the knowldg of their Creator,  
 " and celebrate his Praises, saying, Is  
 " there any greater than this? God him-  
 " self teacheth us this Truth in his Dis-  
 " course with his Servant Job (Job 28. 7.  
 " apud LXX.) When I made the Stars,  
 " & all the Angels prais'd me with a loud  
 " Voice. For by reason of their astonish-  
 " ment proceeding from the Greatness of  
 " that Spectacle, they repeated their Ac-  
 " clamations, and redoubled their Applau-  
 " ses at every Work that God was a doing.

2. God makes use of the Person of an Angel, that bears his Name, and speaks by his Authority. 'Tis thus that he appear'd and spoke to the Patriarchs, and this is the reason why Philo calls Angels Words so often. The Author of *Questions and Answers to the Orthodox* speaks thus of this Manifestation: " All the Angels, saith he, which appeared un- to Men, instead and in the Person of God, have born the Name of God. Men likewise have been call'd Gods. Both these were honour'd with this Title by reason of their Commission, which when at an end, they cease to be call'd Gods. God himself says concerning the Angel that was to conduct the People of

*Israel, Obey him, for I have put my Name in him.* He faith as much of Men, whom he invested with Magistracy: *Ye are Gods, and Sons of the most High.* He faith to them, *Ye are Gods, viz. I have given you my Glory with my Name, and set you in my Place.*

3. Lastly, God appears after a sensible manner in the sanctified Flesh of his Son, who is the Brightness of his Glory, his Image and Character; which is the great Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh, and speaking to us in these last Times by his own Son. For Jesus Christ doth now succeed the Angels, and speaks to us in the Person of God. The Angels are now become his Ministering Spirits, and our Fellow-Servants. *Gregory the Great teacheth us this (Homil. 8. in Evangel.)* " The An- gels, saith he, reconcile him with us; and they who despis'd us in our low Estate, look upon us now as their Companions. Hence it comes that *Lot and Joshua have worshipt Angels, Gen. 19. Deut. 31.* without being re- prov'd for it. But St. John going about to worship an Angel, *Rev. 22.* the Angel repuls'd him, laying, Take heed thou doest it not, I am thy Fellow-Servant. Hence it is, that before the Redeemer's coming the Angels suffer'd themselves to be worshipp'd by Men, without opposing it: but since they now refuse their Adorations, is it not, that seeing our Nature rais'd above theirs, they can no longer suffer that it should be submitted to them, and disdain not to look upon Man as their Companion, ever since they are oblig'd to worship a Man-God?

All these Apparitions are call'd the Word of God, or, to speak with the Hebrews, his Shechinah, that is, his Habitation and his Presence. But the last is the Word of God by way of Excellence; 1. Because God reveals thereby his, final and principal Design, his last and perfect Will. 2. Because God appears here, not only in some measure, but with the Fulness of his Graces. 3. Because he mani- fests

tests himself here not in a transitory manner, but inseparably, intimately and perpetually. Hence it is that the Scripture saith only of J. C. that his Name is the Word of God.

St. John describes to us the first of these Manifestations, when he saith, that the Word was in the beginning, that this Word was with God; and this Word by which all things were made, was God himself. In effect God himself was the Word, when he spake to create the World out of nothing, because he spake immediately, without the intervention of any Angel, or the Ministry of any Man. The Doctrine of St. John is no other herein, than that of the other Sacred Writers. God said, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 33. 9.* and all was made. And to explain what this Speech was, he adds, God commanded, and all was created. Where we see that his Word is nothing else but his immediate Command. Is there any other Mystery in what St. Peter teacheth us, That the Heavens as well as the Earth were made by the Word of God? *2 Pet. 3. 5.* Was it not by his Power and Command? What doth St. Paul mean, when he assures us, That the World was made by the Word of God? *Heb. 11. 3.* You cannot find here the Mystery, for the mysterious Word is not in the Original (it is φῶναι not ἀρχῆς.) He means therefore that the World was made by the single Command of God, and not by the *Logos* of Plato. The same Evangelist St. John a little after describes to us the last of these Manifestations, when he adds, that this Word was made Flesh; that is to say, that the Flesh of J. C. was a glorious Cloud, where God made himself visible in these last Times, and made his Will known: so that the Word, or the Presence of God is now no longer a Body of Light, or the Person of an Angel, but truly a Man, a Body, and palpable Flesh. *Irenæus* calls this Dispensation, the Economy of God in the human Nature, lib. i. c. 4. *Bartholomew of Edessa* conceived no otherwise

of this Incarnation, when he expresseth himself thus in his Refutation of Mahomet: "The Word, saith he, did dwell in the Flesh (τὸν ώρον ἐν σαρκὶ) and this Flesh was made the Temple of God. The Word, or the Power of God, was not made Flesh, according to him; but only because it dwells in the Flesh, as it were in a Temple. God dwelt in the Ark heretofore, and there shewed his Glory and Power, and receiv'd there the Homage from his People; but now he dwells in the Flesh of J. C. but with a greater Power, and in a more glorious and more visible manner."

That St. John had no other thought, may be proved by some of our best Interpreters: But in order to understand them better before we produce their Testimonies, we must say something about the second Manifestation of God, viz. that by the Ministry of the Angels. The Old Testament calls these Heavenly Messengers often, the Face of God, his Glory, and his Presence, which is the same thing with his Word. But besides this, we will set down here those remarkable Words of *Clemens of Alexandria*, lib. i. c. 7. "The Word, saith he, is the Face of God, by the which he manifesteth and makes himself known."

"The Antients had the Old Testament, and the Law instructed them by Fear; and the Word was an Angel (Ἄρχος δύναμος θεοῦ.) But the new People hath receiv'd the New Testament, and the Word was made (καὶ ἀρχὴ παρθενεῖ) and the Fear is turn'd into Love, and Jesus the Mystical Angel is born (καὶ ὁ μετόνομος ἀντίστοιχος ἀγγέλος Ιησοῦς παρθενεῖ τοι.) Dr. Bull relating these Words of Clement (in his Defence of the Council of Nice) *Verbum Angelus erat*, interprets them thus: *Hoc est, per Angelos apparuit;* that is to say, he manifested himself by the Angels (or as Clement speaks, by an Angel, or by the Angel, viz. by the Angel that bore the Name of God) but he is mistaken, if he understands by the Word, an *Hypostasis* distinct from the

Father ; and if he means thereby that the design of Clement was to insinuate to us, that the Son of God did manifest himself by the means of Angels : For who feeth not that these words of Clement, *the Word is the Face of God*, do denote, that the Word is the Manifestation of God ? And these, *the Word was an Angel*, mean, that the Divine Manifestation was an Angel, or was perform'd by an Angel ! Otherwise what can be the meaning of the opposite difference this Father makes between the Word which instructed the Antients by Fear, and the Word which instructs the New People with Gentleness ; that is to say, between the Word Angel, and the Word Man, between God speaking to the Antients by Angels, and speaking to us in these last times by his own Son ? This would be to no purpose. But if on the contrary, we understand by the Word, a Divine Manifestation, either by an Angel, or by his Son, the words of Clement will produce an excellent Sense : He means therefore, of old an Angel was the Word, that is to say, the Presence and the Oracle of God ; and this Manifestation being surprizing and illustrious, was an Oeconomy of Fear. But now a Man like unto us is the Word of God, that is to say, his Presence and his Oracle ; and this Manifestation being more adapted to our State, becomes a Dispensation of Condescendence and Love. So that if these words of Clement, *The Word was an Angel*, do signify that God did manifest himself then by Angels ; these words of St. John, *the Word was Flesh*, will signify likewise that God doth now manifest himself to Men by the Flesh, or, which is all one, by a Man. This is the best Notion we can have of the Word, if we consult the Scriptures, without troubling our selves with Platonick Visions. Clement had the same Notion, and his Words are remarkable, since they give us a Definition of the Word, and at the same time the true Meaning of it. "The Word, saith he, is nothing else but "the Face of God, by the which he

" makes himself known. Three great Men amongst the Reformers have had the same Notion,

The first is Bucer, who translates thus the words of St. John, *Et Deus erat Verbum illud*; conformably to the Syriac Version, which hath it thus, *Deus erat ipsum verbum, God was the very Word*. This Translation doth sufficiently declare the Sentiment of this Divine touching the Word : He means that God, speaking then without a Medium, or the Organ of a Man, or the Ministry of an Angel, was himself the Word ; he put forth his Power by himself. He explains these words thus : "I would, saith he, translate the ἀρχή, the Oracle ; and if it were lawful, go off a little from its first Signification, and render it the Divine Love and Will (*Vix illa Nume*.) The reason is, as he adds, "that we ought not to borrow the Meaning of this Word from the Platonists, but of the Hebrews, it being the same with their *Davar*, which the Greeks have translated ἀρχή. This Assertion is sufficient ; we desire no more ; let us but understand this Word without the Platonick Notions of Hypostasis, a Son begotten before all Ages, &c. let us hold fast the Notion of the Hebrews, who never understood their *Davar*, to be a Person, or a Son. Justin was the first of the Platonick Fathers, that made an Hypostasis of a Power or a Manifestation, having alter'd the Ideas of the Scripture by the Prejudices he brought from the School of Plato. Bucer observes that the Greeks, vix. the Version of the LXX, render the word *Davar* by that of ἀρχή. In effect these Interpreters meant nothing else by their ἀρχή, but only what the Hebrews understood by their *Davar*. 1. That Virtue and Power which God thrust forth, that I may so say, out of himself, when he was about to create the World : *Verbo Domini Cœli firmati sunt, &c.* And 2. That holy Breathing which animated the Prophets, *Verbum Domini factum*

*fatum est ad Prophetam.* Now this two-fold Power is found in J. C. both that which created the World, and also that which inspir'd the Prophets. You see, in the very working of his Miracles, this *Sermon*, or this *Fusus Divinus*, which said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*: His single Word suffic'd, he needed not say any more than, *I will it*. *Say only the word*, said the Centurion to him, *and my Servant shall be healed*. You see moreover, by the Unction receiv'd from the Father, this *Sermo Propheticus*, by the means whereof he hath declar'd to us the whole Will of God, is also to be seen: For God who spake at other times to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath spoke to us in these last Times by his own Son. In these two regards J. C. shew's to the Jews that he is the *Son of God*, or the *Messiah*, putting himself into the number of the *Gods*, whom God sanctified, and to whom the Word of God came, *John 10. vix.* his Word of Authority and Power, and his Word of Revelation and Prophecy. 'Tis in these two Senses that St. John calls him the *Word*; and to put a Metaphysical Signification upon this Word, is a piece of Philosophical Extravagancy.

Let us come now to *Beza*, the second Interpreter I design to produce (*on John 1. 1.*) This Author having related the subtle and Metaphysical Thoughts of the Fathers touching the *Word*; "Tis not "likely, saith he, that St. John would "speak so subtilly on this Subject; we "ought rather have regard to the *Hebrew* than to the *Greek* Phraeology: "For altho' St. John writ in *Greek*, yet it "may be said, that in teaching of *Divinity*, and above all in revealing his "Mysteries, he never departed from the "usual ways of speaking used in the "Holy Writings, and in the Synagogues, "and such as were understood by the "People. Now, according to him, the "Jews were wont to call the *Messiah* "the *Word*, as if it were said, *He of "whom God had spoken, or whom God had*

"promis'd; the blessed Seed whereof "God spake so often to the Patriarchs, "and whom we may call the *Word*, or "the *Promise of God*, by way of excellency. Unlesis it be said, as he goes "on, that this Name was given him, "because he is the only Interpreter of "the Father, by whom he hath manifested himself to the World. But altho' this last Interpretation doth not please him so much as the former, yet he repeats continually, that all the rest of those which the *Greek* and *Latin* Divines embrac'd so greedily, do in no way agree with the *Hebrew* Tongue. This is manifest, and hath no need of Proof. If we discard the Ideas of the *Greeks* and *Platonists*, as *Beza* pretends that we ought, farewell then *eternal Emanations* and *Generations*, farewell *internal Word*, and *Word brought forth*, farewell *Tri-Unity* and *Hypostases*, with all that Theological Jargon, which is pretended to be form'd upon the Stile of St. *John*. And if on the contrary, we go up to the Source, and search into the Stile of the *Hebrews* themselves what this Evangelist meant, the *Word* will then be only the so often promis'd and so long expected *Messiah*, of whom God spake to the Patriarchs; or if you please, that Prophet who was to *interpret* to us, the *Word of the Father*, and that *King of Glory*, in whom the whole Power of God was to be manifested.

Mr. *Wittius* may also be one of those Interpreters of the *Logos* of St. *John*, who discards the *Platonick* Notions. He doth not so much as believe that St. *John* borrow'd this Word from either the *Cabala* of the *Jews*, or the *Chaldee Paraphrasts*, but from the Sacred Writers. And since his Explications and Reasonings are the same with those of *Beza* concerning it, we will not count him for a separate Witness.

The third Interpreter I shall alledg, is *Caius Secundus Curio*, who speaks thus in his *Araneus*: "The Sacred History informs us, that several have seen "God

God present, let it be so: but the fame History teacheth us, that these were Angels and ministering Spirits, who holding the Place of God, did appear unto Men, and spake in his Name in a visible Form and Person. And not this only, but the incomprehensible God being willing to make himself known in a more illustrious manner, did moreover insinuate himself into J. C. with all his Majesty; for we read thus in the Gospel, *The Father that dwells in me, he doth the Works; and he that feeth me, feeth my Father also.* Add to these the Words of the Apostle, *God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself; and these also, He was pleas'd that all the Fullness of the Godhead should dwell bodily in Jesus Christ.* Doth not all this manifestly prove this Author plainly acknowledges, that as Angels had been the Person or the Word of God, J. C. was so likewise? but yet a Word more excellent, and a Person more noble, into which God insinuated himself; nor *God the Son*, as they tell us, but *God the Father*, according to the Passage the Author quotes, *Pater in me manus facit ipse opera.* The Paraphrase of the same Author on the beginning of the Gospel of St. John, is yet more express: "Before, saith he, that God created the World, he had in himself the Cause and the Reason of all things (the Idea and the Design) Altho this Reason was with God, we must not therefore imagine, that it was any thing else but God himself. For God was that Reason; but seeing God cannot be seen with our Eyes, nor comprehended by our Mind, he was pleas'd to put on a Person, under which he might shew himself as it were in his natural and living Image. Now seeing he is an only and simple Being, and cannot borrow any form of himself, he produc'd himself one without, by the mean of a Voice, and a Light wholly Divine; which, because

he made use of it to instruct us and manifest himself, was called his Word; that is to say his Oracle and his Wisdom, &c. to the 14th ver. where he proceeds thus: Would you have me at last to discover this great Mystery? And tell you under what Form God came unto Men? This Word, this Reason, this Wisdom, this Oracle was made Flesh, and this Flesh which is called Man, that he might raise ours to a Sovereign Immortality. A Metamorphosis to be admir'd in all Ages? God was the Word, the Word was the Life, the Life was the Light of Men; the Light was Flesh, the Flesh Man, the Man God, who is blest for ever. God and Man have join'd themselves together; for God was in J. C. reconciling the Word to himself. 'Tis on this wise that God, the Sovereign God (*Deus, Deus ille*) O Man! manifested himself in the Flesh, and conversed amongst us. Hence comes it that a great Prophet gives him the Name of Emanuel.

This Learned Man's Words are remarkable: He saith, that the invisible God being willing to make himself known, was pleas'd to put on a Person, that is to say, give himself a Figure, take a sensible Image, under which he produced himself outwardly. That this Image consisting in a Light and a Voice, which he made use of to shew himself and to instruct us, was for that reason call'd his Word. So that the Word of S. John, and the Image of the invisible God, as S. Paul has it, are the self-same thing. Thus you have the Word excellently well defin'd, according to the Ideas of Clement; neither do I believe, that a nearer and more distinct Notion can be formed of it, nor one more agreeing with the Scriptures, which tell us so often of the Glory of God, of his Face, of his Dwelling, of his Presence, in an Angel, in a Cloud, in a Light, in a Fire, with a Clap of Thunder, with a Voice, or with a gentle and still Sound; and what can

can this be I pray you, but his Person and his Word? You need only read Maimonides, in his *More Nevochim*, P. 1. ch. 25, & 64. where with extraordinary Clearness, he explains what the ancient Word is, saying, that it is the Habitation of the Divine Majesty and Providence in some certain Place, where he would make himself known, which he causeth to dart forth miraculously, under the Representation of a created Light. Would you have the same Word under the N. Testament? Consider the extraordinary Providence that presided at the Conception of the Messiah; behold an Angel that speaks, and is the *Voice of God* on this occasion, a Spirit overshadowing the Holy Virgin, the which resembles so much the light Cloud that cover'd the Tabernacle; behold the *Habitation of God* in the Messiah, dwelling himself amongst us: In a word, see the Majesty of the Father in the Son, whose Glory we have beheld. If this will not suffice, get up the Mount to the Transfiguration of J. C. you will there see an Apparition of two great Prophets, a Cloud that covers them, a Light spreading it self over J. C. his Face, becoming bright like the Sun; and lastly a Voice coming out of the Cloud, saying these Words, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleas'd, hear ye him.* Behold here the Word wherein God gives all the Marks of his Presence; and whence he declares his principal Will, which is, that we should give ear to his Son, the only Oracle and the sole Word, by which he would ever hereafter discover himself and speak to us.

*Irenaeus* had no other Idea of the Word, Lib. 4. c. 37. where he saith: "That the Word designing to shew God in its sundry Dispensations, shew'd him made like to Man, that by this mean he preserv'd to the Father his Invisibility, lest Man should come to despise him: that if the *Manifestation* of God, which was at the Creation of the World, did give Life unto Men; how

" much more will the *Manifestation* of the Father by the Word, give Life to all those who see God on this wise? " That the Prophets never saw the *Face of God* uncover'd, but only certain Dispensations and certain *Mysteries*, by which God began to shew himself; that these first Sketches of the Divine *Manifestation*, were only the Preludes of that which was to be made by J. C. That the Father is invisible in Truth, that no Person ever saw him; but that the *Word* manag'd the Dispensations of the Father, and shew'd their Glory, as it thought fit. *Irenaeus* tells us afterwards, " That the *Word* appeared under different Figures, of a *Man*, a *Wind*, a *Light*, a *Cloud*, a *Fire*, &c. which discovers to us, that all *external Manifestation*, whether it be by *Angels*, or by the *Flesh* of J. C. is the *Word* of God; as all *internal Communication*, whether it be by an *Angel*, or by an immediate Virtue, is the *Holy Spirit*. And all this is call'd the *Economy*; or, as *Irenaeus* faith, they are *mysterious* and extraordinary *Dispensations* of the Divinity, which environ his Majesty to temper its great Splendor, and adapt it to our Curiosity. For to imagine that this is a second Person of this Divinity, as *invisible* and as *infinite* as the first, would make all the Reasonings of the antient Fathers, not only useless, but also absurd; for they all unanimously declare, not only that the Father never makes himself *visible*, but also that he cannot do so.

" It is impossible, faith *Eusebius*, De monstr. Evang. lib. 5. cap. 20. That the Eyes of Mortals should ever see the Supreme God, to wit, him who is above all things, and whose Essence is unbegotten and immutable. It is absurd and against all reason, faith the same Author (*Hist. Eccl.* lib. 1. c. 2.) that the unbegotten and immutable Nature of Almighty God should take the Form of a *Man*, and that the Scripture should forge such like Fancies. God forbid, faith *Novatian* (& de Trinit.

" *Trinit. cap. 26.*) that we should say  
 " that God the Father is an Angel, lest he  
 " should be subjected to him, whose  
 " Angel he were. *Et ibid. cap. 31.* If  
 " the Son, saith he, were as incompre-  
 " hensible as the Father, the Objection  
 " of the Hereticks would have some  
 " ground, that then there are two Gods.  
 " It is an Impiety, say the Fathers of the  
 " Council of Antioch (*Epiſt. adv. Pan-  
 " lum Samosat.*) to fancy that that God  
 " who is above all things, can be called  
 " an Angel. Lastly (otherwife I must  
 transcribe all the Fathers) *Justin Martyr*  
 explains himself on this wise in his Dia-  
 logue with *Tryphon*: " No body, faith  
 " he, unless he be out of his Wits, will  
 " dare to advance, that the Father and  
 " Author of all things did quit the Hea-  
 "vens, to caufe himself to be seen in a  
 " small part of the Earth.

I thought to have finished, but that I  
 can by no means pass by that excellent  
 Passage of *Tertullian* against *Praxeas* (*cap.*  
*16.*) " That he would not believe that  
 " the Sovereign God descended into the  
 " Womb of a Woman, tho even the  
 " Scripture it self should say it. This  
 " Father being persuaded by Reason and  
 " Philosophy, that the supreme God is  
 " immense, immutable and invisible, de-  
 " mands how it could come to pass, that  
 " the Almighty God, whose Throne is  
 " the Heaven, and the Earth his Foot-  
 " stool, that this most high God shoud  
 " walk in the terrestrial Paradise, shoud  
 " converse with *Abraham*, shoud call  
 " to *Moses* out of a Bush, &c. and  
 " what is yet worse, that he shoud de-  
 " scend, according to *Praxeas*, into the  
 " Womb of *Mary*; that he shoud be  
 " impeached before *Pilate*, and be shut  
 " up in the Sepulcher of *Joseph*. He  
 goes on, " Really one would not believe.

" this concerning the Son, if the Scrip-  
 " ture did not speak it; and perhaps  
 " would not believe it of the Father,  
 " tho even the Scripture should say it.  
 How so! would he mistrust the Scrip-  
 " ture? No, he means only, that he  
 should mistrust the literal ſenſe, and ſearch  
 there for an Allegory. Conſequently  
 then all these Fathers own that the Word  
 by which the Father makes himſelf  
 visible, is not of a Nature incapable of  
 cauſing it ſelf to be ſeen, but ſomething  
 ſenſible, which repreſents God to us.  
 It matters not whether they conceive by  
 it an *Hypotaxis*, a *Spirit*, an *intelligent Be-  
 ing*, or any other kind of *Representation*  
 in a bright Cloud animated with a Voice.  
 This will always remain true, that they  
 did not understand the *Word* to be a *Spir-  
 it* equal to the *Father*, as invisible by its  
 Nature as the *Father*, but only a certain  
*Emanation*, where God produceth him-  
 ſelf outwardly, and diſcovers himſelf in a  
 ſenſible manner. And tho they might  
 have ſometimes ſpoken of the *Word*, as  
 of ſomething *inviſible*, they meant not  
 by this that it was *inviſible* by its Na-  
 ture, but only that it was not *visible* to  
 Men out of the time of its *Oeconomy*, re-  
 tireſing it ſelf from their *Preſence*, and be-  
 coming as it were hid in God. Sometimes  
 they would denote by it, even the  
*Energy* and the *Power* of God, where-  
 with his *Manifestation* is always accompa-  
 nied, but never a ſecond *Hypotaxis* in the  
 Divine Nature. For we muſt obſerve  
 here ſincereſly once for all, that the *Word*,  
 if you conſider it only in its *Energy*, is no  
 other thing but God himſelf; but when  
 it is conſider'd as it is a Mark of the Di-  
 vine Preſence, then it is ſomething ſen-  
 ſible, a *Voice*, a *Light*, or ſome external  
 Form, ſuch like as was ſeen in *Angels*,  
 or in the Man J. C. our Lord.

## C H A P. II.

*The Antients believed that the Word was Corporeal.*

Wherfore the Antients attributed a Body to the Word, as *Servetus* very well observed (*Apolog. ad Philip. Melanct.*) and so *Tertullian* speaks in his Book of the Flesh of Jesus Christ against *Praxeos*, chap. 7. where he proves at large, that when God uttered his Word, he gave it a Body, indeed not Body of Flesh, but an Hypostasis, that is, Solidity and Substance, which is the true Signification of the Word. That's probably what he means, when in chap. 6. of the Book of the Flesh of Christ, he assures that Jesus Christ appeared to *Abraham* with Flesh, which was not yet born (*non nata adhuc*) that is to say, nor indeed with such Flesh as ours, but with a solid Body, which had more than appearance. A Body, I say, which he in the 8th Chapter calls the Seed of God; from which as from a Heavenly Seed the Messiah was to be born: and this Seed is the Holy Ghost, or the Substance of the Word, which insinuated it self into it.

Thence the antient *Docetes*, and all the other Hereticks who held the pre-existence of the Word, suppos'd that the Word did not take true Flesh of *Mary*, but that he contented himself with the Celestial and Etherial Body, which he formerly bore in the Apparitions of the Old Testament, which had no more than the Appearance and Figure of a Man, which the Scripture calls the Face of God. Mons. le Moyne did not understand the thing otherwise in his *Varia sacra*, p. 415. "The *Docetes*, says he, compared the Apparitions of Jesus Christ to the Apparitions of the Old Testament, which having been

" in Etherial Bodies for certain times,  
" vanished into the Air as soon as the  
" Dispensation was finish'd, imagining  
" that the Body of Jesus Christ was not  
" of any other Nature. And it is in  
" the same senfe, that *Cerinthius* and *E-  
bion* suppos'd that Jesus Christ had not  
" taken true Flesh, as St. *Jerome* assures  
" in the Preface to his Commentary on  
" St. *Matthew*. As *Cerinthius* held (*I-  
ren. l. 1. c. 25. Epiph. *Heres.* 28.*) That  
the World had been created by a Power; he also maintain'd that Jesus, who was  
begotten of the Seed of *Joseph* and *Mary*, was the Son of the Creator. As to  
the Christ or the Word, he made him the Son of another Power superior to  
the Creator, and attributed to him a Celestial Body, which he had always kept  
without mixing it with the Flesh of Jesus. For we cannot think he suppos'd,  
that Jesus the Son of *Mary* had not Flesh like ours: He meant nothing more than  
that the Word, or the Christ, as he is  
pleas'd to call him, had not appear'd to  
Men, but with a Body wholly celestial  
and impassible; so separating Jesus from  
the Christ, and making two Natures of  
them, as St. *Irenaeus* informs us. It is  
with reason wonder'd that so grave Au-  
thors have said, and so often repeated,  
that *Cerinthius's* Heresy consisted in de-  
nying the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ,  
when he is the first who brings the two  
Natures of Jesus Christ into the Christian  
Religion; the Divine Nature which he  
believed to be impassible, and which  
he makes to descend from Heaven,  
and the Humane which he believed to  
be begotten by *Joseph* and *Mary*. But  
there is yet greater reason to wonder,  
that

that *Irenæus* has been quoted for it, who says nothing less than what Controversiats make him say. All that that Father says, concerning the Error which St. John oppos'd in *Cerinthus*, is, that the World had been created by an inferiour God, or by an Angel; but that there was another superiour God, who had sent his Word or the Holy Ghost in the shape of a Dove, into the Son of *Mary*: That the inferiour Christ, who was called Jesus, was indeed the Son of the Creator; but that the superiour Christ, who descended into the other, was the Son of the most high and unknown God; who after having render'd Jesus capable of working Miracles, and of manifesting the unknown God, withdrew himself into his *Pleroma* when Jesus was to suffer. *Iren.* l. 3. c. 11.

This Opinion was not so much *Plato's* as *Philo the Jew's*, who believed that God had never done any thing but by Angels. Some Hereticks added, that besides the God of the Jews, who was one of those Angels, and Creator of the Universe, there was another God who had never manifested himself until he made himself known by the Coming of the Christ. Indeed it seems that this is the only Error, which St. John opposes in his Gospel. First he shews, therein following the Psalmist, St. Paul and St. Peter, that the World was not made by any other than by the Word, or by the Power of God; that this Word was not an Efficacy or Power distinct or separate from the most High God, that is an Angel or self-subsisting Hypostasis; but that it was in God the Creator as his Efficacy, or to say better, that it was the Creator himself. Then he shews that the Word, the Spirit, or the superior Christ who descended into Jesus, who dwelt in him, and who had wrought so many Miracles, was not an Hypostasis; or an emanated Efficacy of another God than he who had created the World, but the proper Efficacy of God the Creator, the same Word which having created the

World, was united to Jesus Christ, and manifested in him. The Word by which all things were made, says he, was made Flesh, or manifested in the Flesh. Which shews, that Christ was the Son of the Creator, and not of another God superiour to him; and that the World was not made by an Angel, but by the most high God.

Monf. le Myne, among others, believes, that St. John aim'd at opposing this Error. St. John assures, says he, *Varia Sacra*, p. 407. that the Word was made Flesh, in opposition to the Doctrine of the phantastick Body of Christ. He has no other Design in his first Epistle, where he teaches that Christ is come in the Flesh, and protests that he preaches and infests on no other Word of Life, than that which he had seen, heard and touched; that is, according to him, that Christ came no otherwise than in a real Body, and no way in an ethereal one. If we inclin'd to believe that St. John aim'd at *Cerinthus* in writing his Gospel, we might add that it is very remarkable, that as often as this Evangelist relates Jesus Christ's saying, that he descended from Heaven, he always makes him speak as if he directly oppos'd that Heretick. For whereas *Cerinthus* said, that the Christ or a Spiritual Nature descended from Heaven, Jesus Christ assures on the contrary that 'tis the Son of Man, that 'tis his own Flesh which descended from thence; Man, as you see, and not a Nature distinct from Man; Flesh, and not a Spirit. Tis pity that Heretick did not live in the time of our Lord; one might have the Pleasure of forming a curious System on that Subject, which would not be less well contrived, than that which has been built on the Word of St. John with respect to that Heretick. But if we cannot positively assert, that Jesus Christ, or his Disciple did attack *Cerinthus*, we may at least affirm, that 'twas against him, or his like, that St. Irenæus disputed; "They hold," says that Father, l. 3. c. 17,

" 18, 19, &c. 20. that indeed Jesus is  
" born of Mary; but that as to Christ,  
" he descended from above—— so  
" dividing the Lord, by saying that he is  
" composed of two Substances, &c.  
" With their Mouths they confess but  
" one Christ, but in reality they have  
" two—— one *passible*, and the other  
" descending from Heaven, *invisible* and  
" *impassible*—— not knowing that the  
" Word which was united to and mix'd  
" with his Work, and which was made  
" Flesh, is it self that Jesus who suf-  
" ferd' for us.—— But if one suffer'd  
" while the other remain'd *impassible*,  
" it is not one Christ, but two.—— Now  
" every Spirit which divides Jesus Christ  
" (*qui solvit Jesum, Vulg.*) is not of  
" God.—— What hinder'd the Apostles  
" from saying, that Christ descended in-  
" to Jesus; or the Saviour who is above  
" the Oeconomy, into him who is of  
" the Oeconomy? But the Apostles  
" neither knew nor said any thing like it.  
" What there was of it, they said, to  
" wit, that the Spirit descended on him  
" like a Dove. It appears by this Passage,  
and by the whole Work of St. Irenæus, that  
his Opinion was, that the Word was made  
Flesh, not only in communicating it self  
to the Flesh, which the Hereticks believ'd,  
but also in mixing it self with the Flesh.  
And therefore in the 21st Chapter of the  
same Book, he twice calls him the Word  
mix'd and blended (*commixtum Verbum.*)

The same Theology is found in *Novaian, de Trinitate, c. 11, &c. 19.* In  
one place he maintains that Jesus is not  
only a *Man*, but that he is likewise *God*  
according to the Scripture, because the  
Divinity of the Word enter'd into the  
Composition, and mix'd it self with the  
Flesh (*Divinitatis Sermonis in ipsa concre-  
tione permixta.*) In another place like  
unto this, he takes upon himself to demon-  
strate, that the Word having by its  
Union and by its Mixture with the Flesh,  
associated to it self the Son of Man, made  
him what he was not, to wit, the Son of  
God.

Origen says as much of it in his third  
Book against *Celsus*: " The Humanity  
of Christ, says he, rais'd it self to such  
a degree of Divinity, not only by the  
Communication of the Word, but also  
by its Union, and by its Mixture  
therewitch (*permixtione*) that it is be-  
come a God.

Tertullian carrys the matter yet farther  
in his Book of the *Flesh* of Jesus Christ,  
*Ch. 16.* For he supposes that, " As the  
" Clay whereof Adam was formed, was  
" converted into true Flesh, so the Word  
" of God is converted into the Substance  
" of the same Flesh.

Whence I infer that these antient  
Doctors believ'd the Word to be *corporeal*,  
and capable of being compounded with  
the *Flesh*; so that as the *Flesh* has by this  
mixture been in a manner deify'd, the  
incorporated and incarnated Word has like-  
wise been render'd *passible*. I say *passible*,  
taking the Word according to its literal  
Signification, and not by the Figure of the  
communication of Idioms, as we are  
used to speak. For otherwise they would  
have owned two Natures in Jesus Christ,  
the one *passible*, and the other *impassible*,  
which is the very Opinion they oppos'd.  
It is plain, that according to *Irenæus*,  
the Hereticks said, that the Christ had  
been made two Substances, or, as he  
speaks, Substance and Substance (*altera  
& altera Substantia.*) Now what differ-  
ence would there be between two Sub-  
stances and two Natures? Let us then  
say that they could not be any otherwise  
refuted, than by supposing, that the  
Word with the Flesh, made but one *Na-  
ture*, or but one Christ, who from *im-  
passible* as he was, made himself *passible*  
for our sakes. If there be any other  
Substance distinct from the Christ, which  
descended on him, *Irenæus* teaches us,  
that 'tis no other than the *Holy Ghost*, as  
the Evangelists assite us. The *Valenti-  
nians* held that Christ descended into Je-  
sus; thence *Irenæus* infers that they made  
two Christs. Now if the Orthodox had  
held that the Son of God descended into

the *Son of Mary*, 'twas natural thence to draw the same consequence, that then they made two Sons of God. The Gnosticks did not deny that the Son of *Mary* had true Flesh, and that he really suffer'd : They only taught, that Christ who descended into him, concreting himself with his Celestial and Ethereal Body, did not so unite himself to the Flesh of the Son of *Mary*, as to have truly suffer'd with him ; and therein they divided Christ. *Irenaeus* would no less have divided Christ into two, if he had believed, that the *Word* always remain'd *impassible*, while the Man whereunto it was united, did suffer. He could not therefore refute them, but by supposing, that this *Word* so united it self to the *Flesh*, that from being *impassible* as it had been before, it became *passible*, almost as our Soul is so join'd to our Body, that it suffers with it.

If the *Trinitarians* now hold, that the Divine Nature did not suffer, they are in the same Opinion with those Hereticks : and if by reason of the Union of the two Natures, they can say that the *Son of God* or the *Word* suffer'd, because one of the two Natures did suffer, the Hereticks might also have

said, that *Christ* did not suffer, because one of the two Substances had not suffer'd. And that the rather, because 'twas the Substance which had the Personality, whereto the Actions and Passions do belong : For who doubts but that they were provided with many distinctions ? What *Irenaeus* said in Chap. 21. of the same Book, may be objected to the Opinion which I ascribe to him, viz. that " the *Word* suspended his efficacy, that *Jesus Christ* might die. But that does not signify that the *Word* did not suffer, but that he would not make use of his Power to hinder himself from suffering, as appears by the following opposite Proposition : " That the Man " was absorb'd, that *Christ* might rise " again. Which does not exclude the Man from Resurrection, but means only, that his Infirmitie and his Nothingness brought no obstacle thereto, having been surmounted by the Power which rais'd him from the Dead. We might support this Hypothesis with many Passages of the Epistles of *Ignatius*, but that Discussion would carry us too far. It is to be remember'd that we give only an Essay, and not a compleat Dissertation on the Word of St. John.

### C H A P. III.

#### *What the Spirit of God is, where the Word is again consider'd: The Cause of that Error.*

**A**fter having spoken of the outward Manifestation of God, I come to the manner whereby he communicates himself inwardly. God is a rich Spring which hath always been diffusing it self ; which he hath done either by insinuating himself into all his Works, into which he hath inspired Soul and Life, so that there is not any part of the Universe which bears not some Strokes and Rays of his Di-

vinity : or by shedding his extraordinary Favours into those of his intelligent Creatures, whom he has often chose to be the Interpreters of his Will. With respect to the former, his Communication is call'd the *Spirit*, or the *Breath of God* : The Spirit mov'd upon the Deep, to stir the confused Mass of the World, and prepare Matter for the *Word of God*, who framed the several Parts of it. Therefore

fore the Author of *Pimander* did not conjecture amiss, when he thinks that what *Moses* said of the *Spirit of God*, which moved upon the Deep, is to be understood of the *Word of God*. It's the same *Spirit*, but in a more noble degree, which infinuated it self as the Breath of God into the Body of *Adam*, to inspire into him *Knowldg* and *Reason*. *God's Hands* made him, the *Spirit of God* gave him Life: Two Powers which always accompany each other in the Work of the Creation. A double Power, which *David* expresses, by saying in *Psal. 33.* That by the Word of the Lord the Heavens were made, and their Strength cometh from the Breath of his Mouth. There is a like Expression in the Book of *Judith*, ch. 16. 17. *Thou saidst the Word, and the Heavens were made; thou didst send thy Spirit, and he built them.* All which well expresses God's Command outwardly, his Energy and Efficacy inwardly; which *Philo* somewhere calls *two Powers* accompanying God; and a Doctor of the Church (*Irenaeus*) the Creator's two *Hands*.

To express God's not needing any other than himself, his Omnipotent Will, his single Command, his Strength only, and having no occasion for Instruments and Machines, a Learned Bishop (*Mons. de Meaux Disc. on Univ. Hist. p. 138.*) says, "God is represented to us as he who does all, and who does all by his *Word*, as well because he does all by Reason, as because he does all without Labour, and that the doing so great Works costs him but one single Word, that is, it costs him no more than the willing it. The Jewish Lawgiver, says *Longin.* (*Traict. de Sublim.*) who was not an ordinary Man, well conceiving the Greatness and Power of God, express'd it in its full Dignity, at the beginning of his Laws, by these Words: *God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light.*

"All that God does, says *Rabbi Mai-mon* (*More Nevochim*, Par. 1: c. 23.)

"is attributed to his *Word*, as in *Psal. 33. 6.*  
 "The Heavens were created by the *Word* of God, &c. by a Comparison taken from the Kings of the Earth, whose *Word* is the only Instrument they employ to execute their Wills. Indeed God has no need of any Instrument whereby to act, he does all by the sole Act of his Will. And, *Ibid. c. 65.* "The *Word* of God, says he, signifies no other than his *Will*. But because Men cannot presently apprehend how a thing can be made by the Will only, thinking it necessary, that he who will make any thing, must either do it himself, or cause it to be done by others; the Scripture says, that God commands that a thing be, when he will have it to be, not only by comparison to our manner of acting, but also because those Expressions do also signify the *Will*. So as often as in the Work of the Creation we meet with the words, *God said*, it is the same as *God willed*: And these, that the Heavens were created by the *Word* of God, is the same thing as by the *Spirit of his Mouth*: For as his *Mouth* and his *Spirit* are Metaphorical Expressions, so his *Speech* and his *Word* are also Metaphorical, the meaning whereof is, that things exist by his *Will only*. And lastly in *Cap. 66.* mentioning these Words of *Psal. 8.* *The Heavens are the Works of thy Hands; or of thy Fingers*; he says, that the *Finger of God* is the same thing with the *Word of God*, and the *Word of God* the same thing with the *Will of God*.

*Grotius* makes almost the same Observation on *John 1. 1.* "Because, says he, *Moses* wrote, *God said, Let there be Light*, the Hebrews have thence call'd *Devar* (the *Word*) that *Power* or *Divine Emanation*, by which God brought things out of Nothing, and worketh all that is uncommon and extraordinary; *Psal. 33. 6. & 148. 8.* That which we read of *Isaiah*, *My Hand hath laid the Foundations of the Earth,*

"Earth, is in the Chaldee, I have laid- fested himself by meer Apparitions, which  
"the Foundations of the Earth by my do not imply any Union of the Godhead  
"Word. (St. Peter uses the same Ex- with the Person who was honour'd with  
"pression, 2 Ep. 3. 5.) And that Pa- them. But here it must be observ'd,  
"raphraſt uſes it ſo when treating of with reſpect to Propheticall Communica-  
"Miracles, Prophecy, or God's extra- tion, that there are two kinds of it,  
"ordinary Aſſiſtance; and particular- whereof each hath its ſpecifick Character.  
"ly when the Hebrew ſays, the Eyes, The firſt, which was when God ſpoke  
"the Hand, or the Face of God. Whence by the Prophets, was only for particulares  
it appears that in Scripture, ſaying that Dispensations, for certain Times and Mi-  
the Hands of God laid the Foundations niftryſ. The other, which was demon-  
of the Earth, or that he laid the Foun- tralated in Jesus Christ, to whom the Di-  
dations of it by his Word, or by his Spi- vine Nature was communicated in a much  
rit, are equivalent Exprefſions; and con- more perfect manner, was inseparable  
sequently that there is no Mystery in this and perpetual. The firſt is called the  
Term Word or Speech. Otherwife we Holy Ghost, the Second is nor only  
muſt ſeek it alſo in Hand, Finger, Mouth, called the Holy Ghost, but alſo the Word,  
etc. and make of 'em ſo many Persons because Jesus Christ was not only a Pro-  
of the Trinity. Twould be much more phet by reaſon of the Gifts received from  
proper to ſay with the Bishop of Meaux, the Holy Ghost, but alſo because he was  
as above noted, that thereby is ſignify'd begotten a Prophet, and born a Prophet: a  
nothing more with reſpect to God, than distinction which raises him infinitely  
that the doing great Works cost him but above all other Prophets.

But I ſaid, in the ſecond place, that there is another more excellent Communica-  
tion, when God fills with his extraor-  
dinariy Gifts, and, if I may ſo ſpeak, overflows with his Favours, thoſe of Man-  
kind whom he appoints to execute his  
Decrees, as his Prophets and other Meſ-  
ſengers; and particularly the Meſſiah,  
whom he ſent into the World with all  
the Characters of an extraordinary Con-  
ſecration. This latter kind of Communica-  
tion is called the Holy Ghost: And here-  
again we ſee on the one hand, the Word  
and the Commission of God addreſs'd to  
his Miſter; and on the other, the Holy  
Ghost confirming God's Order to the Miſter,  
and confeſſing on him Power to  
diſcharge all the Duties of his Office. So  
true it is that the Word and the Spirit are  
two united Powers which ordinarily work

iv: I ſay ordinarily, because Caſes  
been ſeen where the Communica-  
tion at any Manifeſtation; and, on  
contrary, others, where God mani-

This is the Truth which St. John de-  
sign'd to teach us in writing the Preface,  
or Prologue to his Evangelical History,  
viz. that the ſame Jesus who was born  
of a Woman, was born the Christ, or is  
the Chrift, in right, and by the advan-  
tage of his Birth. And thencefrom which  
he gives for it is, that the Holy Ghost,  
or the Word, for that's the ſame thing,  
did not only make his Fleſh, but alſo  
infuſing himſelf into it, as the antient  
Doctors ſpeak, did thenow the Prin-  
ciples of his Propheticall Operations, in  
the ſame manner as our bodily Fathers  
do, not only give us Birth, but often  
transmit to us the Seeds of their Indi-  
nations and Vereues. Now that which  
had never been ſeen in any other Pro-  
phet, obliged the Evangelist to call Jesus  
Christ the Word, to diſtinguiſh him from  
all other Prophets and Interpreters of God;  
and to exprefs himſelf in fo forcible a  
manner on the Birth of this great Pro-  
phet, in ſaying that the Word was made  
Fleſh. The old Tranlation was, Verbum  
Domini factum eſt ad Prophetam. The  
new has ſomething more emphatical;  
Verbum

*Verbum Domini factum est caro;* the Word infinuated it self into the Flesh, and prepared it for Prophecy.

*Marius Victorinus*, to give an Idea of this twofold Divine Dispensation, *Manifestation and Communication*, says in his 2d Book againt *Arius*, “ That there is a double Energy or Operation of the Word, the one in a manifest way, *Christ in Flesh*; the other in a secret way, the *Holy Ghost*. Whereupon he calls the Father, a *Voice in silence*; the Son, the *Voice*; and the *Holy Ghost*, the *Voice of the Voice*. Which shews that the *Holy Ghost* is the *Word of the Son*, as the Son is the *Word of the Father*. And it is in this manner that St. Basil speaks,

*advers. Eunom.* “ The Son is the *Word* of the Father, and the *Holy Ghost* is the *Word of the Son*; Θεος λόγος ὁ ἄγαγος, γίγνεται δὲ ὁ πατὴρ τῷ πνεύματι. Now we see by what means Error was introduc'd. God having reveal'd himself to his Creature by way of outward *Manifestation*, and by way of inward *Communication*, out of those two Dispensations have been made so many Divine Persons, distinct from God the Father; that is, a second Person was made of the *Manifestation*, and of the *Communication* was made a third. It is however but one and the same God, one and the same Divine Person, one God manifesting himself, one God communicating himself: In a word, one God, who in *communicating* himself, and in *manifesting* himself, varies his Character according to the diversity of his *Economies*. He changes *Economy*, but, as we speak, without changing *Person*; (for I take this Word here according to the Philosophical Ideas, which are the same with those of the common People, and not in the sense of Classical Authors, according to which it is certain God changes *Person* as often as

he changes *Character and Dispensation*.) And indeed whether God clothe himself with a Body of most pure Light, an *Economy* proper for Angels; or shew himself to the Patriarchs under transitory Forms, an *Economy* proper for particula Circumstances; or make his fix'd abode among us, in the Person of his Son, an *Economy* proper for the calling of all Nations; it is still the same God, one God manifesting himself. Again, whether God give his *Creature Life and Motion*, or kindle in Man the Light of *Reason*, or inspire Prophets, or shed forth an immense Influence upon the *Messiah*, whom he sends to us; 'tis yet always the same God, one God *communicating* himself. 'Tis the same who appears every where; the same who makes himself to be known by Angels thro the brightness which encompasses him; the same who by his powerful Voice commands all things to come out of nothing, and they obey him; the same who shews himself to the Patriarchs in momentaneous Apparitions of Angels; the same who discovers himself somewhat more plainly, when he declares his *Councils* to us by the Mouths of his Prophets. In fine, the same who dwelling in *Jesus Christ*, shews us his Majesty openly in all its fulness, if I may so express my self after St. Paul: In *Jesus Christ*, says that Apostle, dwells the fulness of the God-head bodily; in him greater than the Angels, better authorized than *Moses*, and more enlighten'd than the Prophets. This is a *Mystery of Love and Condescension*, by which that Supreme and ineffable Being, who dwells in Light inaccessible, comes and dwells among us, and accomodating himself to our weak Apprehension, makes himself be heard by our Ears, seen by our Eyes, and even felt by our Hands.

## C H A P. IV.

*God reveals himself only by corporeal Representations, suited to the Narrowness of our Understanding.*

THIS Economy is general: It runs throuth the whole Scripture, where God, with the Goodnes of a Father, explains his Perfections to us by Representations tending to help our Weaknes. 1. Because we cannot apprehend his Eternity, and how he is necessarily Self-existent. He speaks of it as a Man, telling us that he was before the Mountains were born, before the Heavens were stretched out, and the Stars lighted. Which, by the way, overthrows the Objection taken from God's necessary Existence, to shew, that if we deny the Trinity because it is incomprehensible, we should for the same reason also deny this necessary Existence, as being no less so. I say, this Objection does not reach us, since the same God who in condescension to us declares his Eternity and Existence by Ideas, proportion'd to our Capacitys, would not have deliver'd this suppos'd Trinity to us by Ideas, not only incomprehensible, but even destructive of his Unity, and of the Revelation which he has made of it. 2. Because 'tis impossible for us to apprehend his Immensity, he only makes us conceive it by the Idea of a great King, whose Throne is the Heavens, and the Earth his Footstool. And 3. Because we are incapable of framing any true Idea of his Power, and of his other Perfections, he speaks of himself, as of a Man having Eyes, Hands, Ears, Bowels, &c. to signify to us his Knowledg, Power, Mercy, Wisdom, &c.

St. Augustin so well understood this Stile of the Scripture, that he places among the false Ideas which Men have of

the Godhead (*De Trinit. l. i. c. 1.*) that which is used to express its Perfections in Terms merely Metaphysical, and which are not borrowed from any of the things in being. "The Scripture, says he, never us'd any other than corporeal Similitudes to express the Nature of God to us by; nor that the thing is so, but to shew us that it is necessary to speak so. As to things which are not, (He means, which are not in the Creature, but are presumptuously supposed to be in God, of which have no other Being than only in Philosophical Contemplations, which are called *Ideas, or Entia Rationis*) "the Scripture does not from them take any manner of speaking, to mark out the Figures of them to us, or to make Enigma's (that is, *Mysteries*) of them for us. Nothing is more dangerous than to imagine that in God, which is neither in himself, nor in any Creature. But the Paraphrase of Mr. Du Pin will be less suspected than my Translation (*Hist. Eccl. Auth. Tom. 3. p. 467. Par. Edit.*) Thus some, says he, to form an Idea of God which may have nothing in common with the Creature, conceive him in a Chimerical manner. The Holy Scripture is accommodated to Mens Weakness, in sometimes attributing to God such Expressions as properly suit only to Bodys, or to imperfect Spirits; and has rarely made use of such Names which are agreeing to God only, because it is in this Life very difficult to know the Substance and Essence of the Divine Nature. To this Paraphrase I will add a few Words

Words of the same Father (*ib. c. 12.*)  
 "There is not," says he, in the Scrip-  
 "ture any manner of speaking, but  
 "what is us'd among Men, because 'tis  
 "indeed to Men to whom it speaks.

*Minutus Felix* discourses almost in the same manner, on the Knowledge which we can have of that immense and infinite Nature. For after having said, that "God as he is in himself, is known by none by himself: He adds, "I will say what I think: He who believes he knows God's Greatness diminishes it; and he who fears diminishing it, does not know it. Could he more plainly tell us, that we cannot have a right Idea of God, but in diminishing his Perfections, and contending our selves to compare them to the highest Idea of Greatness, which we can frame of them ourselves. conceiving otherwise of him with Eternity, which has neither past nor future; with Immensity, which fills no space; with Trine-unity, &c. is conceiving chimerically of him. Let it then be undisputable, That God makes himself known to us only by Characters, which are common to him with his Creatures, or extremely well proportion'd to our Ideas.

We have hitherto said, that 'tis a kind of Figure which represents God to us according to the manner of Men: But perhaps it has not been observed, that this Scale is grounded on the Angel of God's appearing in his Name, and by his Authority, who was called his Face, his Glory, his Habitation and his Presence, that is to say, who was his Word and his Oracle; this Angel, I say, appearing most commonly in the Shape and Figure of a Man. Some of the Ancients were bold enough to say, that this Word shew'd himself to the Patriarchs in the same shape of Face, with which Jesus Christ should one day appear; and they suppos'd (as *Servetus* has well explain'd it, *lib. 3. p. 108, &c.*) That the Word was no other than God's Person, that is to say, the Image where-

by God manifested himself; and that that Image was the very shape of Jesus Christ Man, there being, according to them, but one only Divine Person, one only Face, one only Representation, which has always been the same, whether in God's immediately shewing himself in created Light, or in Angels, or in the Messiah, who spake to us in his Name. And 'tis in this sense that we may say, that the Person of the Son is Eternal.

Tis easy to apprehend the Mind of the Fathers. They meant that the Word was no other than the Idea of Jesus Christ Man, who being in God's Understanding from all Eternity, was put forth in a visible Form; God, who delighted to manifest himself in time by his Messiah, having from the beginning, even in the Creation of the Universe, given Prejudices of his great Design, in shewing himself to either Angels or Men, only under the visible Form, which his Son was in time to have, which he desir'd in the Symbol of the Manifestation, and of his Presence, whether by an Angel, by Light, or by a Cloud. So that to speak properly, the Word was made Flesh, because the same Power which made the World, became the Power of Jesus Christ; and the same shape of Face which appear'd to the Patriarchs, was made the shape of his Face, and the Figure of his Flesh. I do not defend this Opinion of the Fathers, I only shew what it was, without obliging my self to maintain it; and this ought likewise to be understood of all their other Hypotheses.

Be that as it will, the Patriarchs being by those kind of Apparitions accus'd to represent God to themselves in humane Shape, God was also pleas'd to speak to them of his Perfections, in a manner suited to the Idea of his Person, which they had fram'd to themselves. Whereon *Maimonides* observ'd, that the Chaldean Paraphrast, to rectify that Idea of the Deity, uses the Term Word, to signify in a less familiar manner,

ner, the several Dispensations of Providence, which the Scripture calls the *Eyes, Hands and Affections* of God. It is true, that the Paraphrast intending to soften all those Expressions, which seem to attribute to God corporeal Parts and human Passions unworthy of his Majesty, did in their stead use this Term, *The Word of God*, which seems to bring into our Minds more Spiritual Ideas of the supreme Deity. But he did not consider, that if 'tis unworthy of God to have *Eyes, Hands and Ears* attributed to him, it will not be less so to give him a *Mouth*.

Breath, a Voice and Speech. So that it must be granted, that if by a kind of Figure the Scripture mentions the *Eyes of God, the Hands of God, &c.* it is by the same Figure that we say the *Breath of God, and the Word of God*. Whereby all the Mystery pretended to be found in this latter Expression must vanish, and we learn not to philosophize so nicely upon the *Oeconomies*, wherein God takes various Forms to make himself the better known to us, or on manner of speaking, which he has suited to our weak Conceptions.

## C H A P. V.

### *How the Philosophers, and particularly Plato, attain'd the Knowledge of the three Principles, three Principles, &c.*

IT has been said of the most famous Philosophers, *Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato*, that they heard the *Voice of God*. Which rightly understood, signifies no more than that they had heard that silent Language of the Heavens, which publish the Glory of God, and declare the Works of his Hands. *Clement Alexander.* (*Strom. l. 1. c. 27.*) who so explains it, says further: "That those Philosophers, considering the Structure of the Universe, heard and saw himself laying, God spoke and things were made, and teaching them that the Word was the Work of God, & *λόγος της οὐρανοῦ εἶναι*. And in truth, after thoroughly philosophizing on the Principles of the World, they always came thence to conclude, and think that it was the Production of an Universal Reason, and of an *immaterial Spirit* which animated it. And they held these first Causes to be the Properties of one only Maker, I mean the most perfect Being. In philosophizing it was natural first to

consider, whether the World had always existed, or whether it had been made? This Question which Clem. Rom. makes to himself (*Recognit. l. 1. c. 27.*) Some chose to believe the World's Eternity, but they were but few, and they follow'd the System of *Ocellus Lucanus*. Others, who were wiser and more enlightened, apprehended that it must have had a Beginning, and themselves philosophiz'd according to the Principles of *Time and Eternity*.

The Question was, further to know how and by whom the World had been made? The whole System of the anti-heretic Philosophy runn'd upon this Question. The Philosophers made their Ecclastics on it, and after Attention and Study, the most knowing among them heard the *Voice of God, or the Voice of Nature*, which taught them, that the World was the Workmanship of an infinitely good, all wise, and omnipotent God. *Plato* was the first who brought this System to Perfection. *Thales, Hermippus* and

and in *Akragas* discover'd a Spirit which A mere *Goodness* gave Birth to the Design of it, that profound *Wisdom* fram'd its Model and Figure, that infinite *Power* executed so great a Project; and that these three Properties together preserve it, and give Motion to all its Springs.

This Philosophy was not unknown to *Caius Abdoninus*, as he expresseth himself clearly enough on it, in his Preface to his 1st Book (*Epistola antiqua*) "The Heavens says he, relate God's Glory, &c. It is - certainly so; the Greatness of so ex-quisite a Work, its Strength and Mo-tion do well shew the astonishing Pow-  
er of its Maker: Its Economy and so well contriv'd Disposal publish his *Wisdom*, and we discover Infinite Goodness in its Usefulness and Advan-tages. Wherefore the Divine *Plato* rever'd this Universe, as the most

*high God.* *Plato* to anno

the Origin of the World, by Au-diting England, contemplating on the World he saith The *visible Creations* of God, says St. Paul, Rom. 10. 20. *consist* *in* *E-ternal Power* and the other *Attributes* of God, *the Glory and Honour* *of him* *whose* *Visible* *Creation* *is* *order'd* *by* *his Word* from the *Creation* *of the World*.

Tis therefore certaine that *was* *by* beholding this World, *that* *the Author* *of* *ethos* *was* *found* *out*; *and* *that* *it* *was* *discovered* *that* *they* *were* *the* *effect* *of* *Infinite Goodness*, *Wisdom* and *Power*. And they were no further because the System of good Philosophy, with respect to the Creation, proves compleat with these three Principles, as has been alrea-dy said. And indeed on the least Appli-cation, in considering the Existence of this Universe, its well contriv'd Dis-posal, its Parts so exactly adjusted to each other, its admirable Order, its re-gular Motion, its Vastness, Form, Laws and Proportions, its Corruptions and Produc-tions, its Duration, Stability and Variety, and in a word, all the Wonders wherewith it is filled; one must necessarily conclude the Meditation, in confessing that im-

*Sophistus Pollio* reasons in the *Pla-tonic Logion*: Observe, my self, all things which have Being; God makes them to be by his Word, disposes them by his Action, and brings them to their Perfection by his Power. Good Phi-losophy went directly to a Trinity, which may be known by the Light of Nature. Some difference will be seen in the manner of expressing; but in the main it is always the same Truth.

*Plato* saw this great Truth. Some o-thers had seen it before him, tho' not so distinctly. However they all saw it, not only by way of the *Oabda* and Tradition; as is now pretended, but as a natural Thing, and as a Truth which was owing

to their diligent Search and Enquiry. A modern Author hath with much Reason acknowledged (*Graverol in his Moses vindicatus*, p. 89.) " That all that is said of the Origin of Philosophy among the *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans* and *Grecians*, is a most uncertain Tradition; and his Opinion is, that 'twas the Fruit of their Study and Experience. What he says of Philosophy in general,

is yet in particular more true of this part of it, which treats of the three Principles whereof we have been speaking. It is by their long Searches into the Origin of the World, and not by Tradition (at least by a very uncertain and confus'd Tradition) that they attain'd to the Knowledge of these three Principles, *God*, *Wisdom* and *Power*.

## C H A P. VI.

### *A Digression concerning Socrates's Genius.*

**T**HOSE are the invisible Excellencies which are disposer'd in the visible Works of the Creation, and Natural Philosophy, which does not depend on Tradition, but on Contemplation and Study. *Socrates* did not take any other Method to find the Truth, as *Aristotle* relates after *Plato*: *sic Deo Socratis*. " *Socrates*, says he, being inspir'd by his Genius, has affirm'd us that he heard a *Celestial Voice*. These Words rightly understood, prove what I have been allecting: For I don't think this *Celestial Voice* can signify either the *Chaldeans* *Caed*, or any particular Revelation. He must be little skill'd in the Allegorical Philosophy of those Times, who does not see that by these Words, *Genius*, *Reason*, *Celestial Voice*, was meant nothing more, than that *Socrates* by the force of his own *Genius* and *Reason*, which he always consulted, had apprehended this *Divine Language* of Nature, which declares a Creator to us. *Reason* duly consulted, and *Nature* well understood, are the Oracle of wise Men: " *Reason*, says *Meracles Ponticus*, explaining Homer's Allegories. " *Reason* is a *Demon*, which God hath planted in the superior part of the Body, to inspire us with truly *Celestial Inclinations*.

The Author who gives us the Life of *Socrates* in French, having mention'd the several Opinions of those who literally believ'd that *Socrates* had a familiar Demon, adds: " That some others suppos'd that this *Genius* was only his natural Judgment or his Soul: that 'twas that which he called his Demon, according to the manner of speaking us'd by Philosophers, who sometimes give that Name to that Divine Part of Man, which guides and governs him. This Doubt, adds he, is also propos'd by *Plutarch*, in the first Question concerning *Plato*, where speaking of *Socrates*, he says, Did he not give the Name of *God* to the own *Nature*? Thereon quoting the Opinions of *Menander*, *Heracitus* and *Xenocrates*, who say, that every one's Soul is his God or a *Demon*. — A Friend of *Socrates* having gone down to *Trebyrium* his Cave, on purpose to know from the Oracle what the *Demon* of *Socrates* was, brought no other Answer thence, than that the superior Part of our Soul, which is not overpowr'd by our Passions, is by the vulgar call'd *Understanding*, but that those who speak better call it a *Demon*. Another Oracle answer'd *Socrates*'s Father, " That

" That he should let his Son do whatever came into his Mind, without thwarting his natural Inclination, because he had in him a Guide and Director more worth than ten thousand Masters.—As to the *Voice* which he heard, 'tis a manner of speaking, like the Phrafe we daily use, *my Mind tells me;* because there is nothing more natural, than ascribing Speech and a Voice to that secret Motion of the Soul, from which, as from a faithful Voice, we receive so many Counsels and Informations.—Where-to add his Prudence, solid Judgment and great Experience in the things of the World. For why might not such a piercing Mind as his, exercis'd by long Study in Philofophy, and by attentive Observation of the Manners and Affairs of Men, which might have requir'd an extraordinary Facility of Reasoning on all sorts of Circumstances : Why, I say, might he not have seen clearer than others, and have discover'd things which are most commonly hid from vulgar Understandings ? By this Discourse of Monsieur Charpentier, it appears that Philosophers have a Mysterious and Theological Lan-

guage, distinct from that of the Vulgar ; and that we must not suffer our selves to be so deceiv'd by their pompous Words as to make a venerable *Mystery* of a mere *Allegory*. It is what Father Simm did not omit observing (*Crit. Hist. of the New Testament*, p. 95.) " The *Platonists*, says he, who have often express'd themselves more like Divines than Philosophers, mean nothing more by the *Demon or God of Socrates*, than *Reason*. The Author of the *Critical, Moral, and Historical Reflections*, is also of this Opinion, p. 66. " *Socrates*, says he, " was no wise, that foreseeing all things, it was believed that he had a familiar *Demon* : but that *Demon* was nothing else but his Attention on the Present, Reflection on the Past, and Penetration into the Future, grounded on Conjectures, which the Study of the World furnish'd him with. The same Author quotes, pag. 215, this good Saying of *Diogenes* : " Those who have Understanding need not trouble the Oracles. And indeed those Men of Parts, like *Socrates*, have a living Oracle and familiar *Demon*. Thus the Ancients low'd to theologize the commonest things, and to find Gods every where."

## C H A P. VII.

### *A Continuation of the Doctrine of the Three Principles.*

**A**fter this Digression concerning the *Demon of Socrates*, we'll return to *Plato*. That Philosopher had attain'd to a perfect Knowledge of these three Principles, *Goodness, Wisdom and Power*; and understood thereby, 1. That the World was not External and *Unbegotten* ; but that the Supreme Father, thereto inclined by a Disposition of *Goodness*, had begotten it by his *Wisdom*, and filled it with his *Power* : three Principles which

he call'd the *Good*, the *Reason*, and the *Soul* of the World. 2. That the Production of the World was not an effect of Chance, or of any blind Principle, but of a most *good* and most *wise* Cause, of an intelligent and rational Power.

The Author of the *Recognitions*, 1. 8. c. 19. informs us, that this was *Plato's* meaning. For arguing against those who attributed the World's Origin to the fortuitous jumbling together of Atoms,

Atoms, he applies himself to prove that 'tis the effect of profound Wisdom; and not forgetting one rational Property, comes thence to say, that 'tis the Work of Reason, which Reason, says he, I call the Word and God. It is apparent that Plato had no other thought than that of this Author. Nevertheless, fearing Socrates's Fate, he veil'd these great Truths under a Cloud of Fictions and Enigmas, which prov'd a Snare to his Disciples: and, not having Courage enough to oppose common Error, made of these three Properties of the Creator, so many Gods, or Divine Persons; complying with the Theology of that Age, wherein Powers, Passions, Properties, &c. Fortune, Fate, Justice, Love, Virtue, Honour, Safety, Concord, &c. were not otherwise conceiv'd than under the Idea of so many Deitys; so much was the Plurality of Gods the Philosophy à la mode, even among the Wiseſt.

"It is difficult," said Plato (*apud Clem. Alex. Strom. I. 5.*) "to find the Father of this Universe; and when you have found him, 'tis not permitted to speak of him to the People." Meaning, that it was dangerous to declare a Truth which gave offence to the received Opinion of the Plurality of Gods, and which, consequently, could not be declared otherwise than under the Veil of Allegory, and under the Fiction of many Hypostases. So he explains himself in his second Letter to Dionysius: "I will speak to you," says he, by Enigma, that if by accident this Letter happen to fall into other hands, he may not, in reading, understand it.

*Minutus Felix* made the same Observation after Clemens: "Plato, says he, speaks more clearly of God than any other Philosopher; and his Doctrine would be perfectly Divine, if he had not spoil'd it by a mixture of the Religion establish'd by the Laws of his Country. For, according to Plato in *Timaeus*, God is the Father of the World, even by this being God. He is

"Creator of the Soul, and of all things as well Celestial as Terrestrial: But that Philosopher does previously advertise, that 'tis difficult to find him because of his infinite Power; and that when he is found, it is impossible to explain one's self concerning him to the common People. Why impossible? Because dangerous. These few Words contain an Abridgment of our whole System: That Plato spake of God only with respect to the Creation: That he believ'd him to be the Father of the World, and consequently that the World is his Son: That he knew him better than other Philosophers; and that nevertheless he has spoil'd that Knowledge, by mixing with it the Errors of his Country, because he thought it too dangerous to speak his thoughts of it openly. That is, he had not liberty to speak his Mind; and to please a superstitious Populacy he was forc'd to make as many Hypostases and Gods, as he had discover'd Perfections in the World's Creator. In a word, to philosophize on the Origin of the World securely, he was oblig'd subtilly to feign a Genealogy of Gods, a Father, a Begotten Son, a third proceeding from those two, and to turn the whole Cosmogony into a mere Theogony.

We know Proclus, one of Plato's Disciples, maintain'd that his Master plac'd a Supreme God above this Trinity of Principles whereof we have been now speaking; which plainly enough shews, that under these three feign'd Essences or Persons he design'd to hide the several Perfections of the most High God, whom he believ'd to be but one Essence and one Person; but he multiply'd him after the manner of the Heathens, to shelter himself from the Rigour of the Laws.

It is not to be doubted but all the Philosophers had the same aim of preserving the Unity of God under a multitude of feign'd Personalities, without any danger to themselves. Unless any will suppose it to have been a witty Invention, which they fram'd for the better instructing and fixing

figuring the Minds of the common People, who are pleas'd with Wonders and Mysteries. One may indeed believe that they did it with a good intention, designing to place, instead of gross Polytheism, the several Properties of the True and most High God; that the People might insensibly receive an exchange which was so advantageous to them. And so much the worse for Christians, who have been bldy'd by this Eastern Philosophy, in taking literally a Method which was merely Allegorical. I will conclude this Reflection on the three Platonick Principles with this Observation of *Origen*, agreeing with the Doctrine of St. Paul (*Lib. 6. contra Cel.*) "That Philosophers having in the Creation of the World, beheld what is invisible in God (which this Father calls the *Divine Ideas*) and being rais'd from sensible to Spiritual things, did plainly enough perceive his Eternal Power and Godhead. But what are these invisible Excellencies which appear in the Creation? They are the three Principles, whereof *Plato* was pleas'd to make three *Hypotheses* or *Persons*.

*Dr. Cudworth* saw the Contrivance of this Mystery, pag. 590. of his *Intellectual System*: "The three *Hypotheses* of the *Platonists*, says he, do not seem to be really any thing else than Infinite Goodness, infinite Wisdom, and infinite Power and Love. *Irenaeus*. l. 3. c. 45. owns the same Truth? " *Plato*, says he, "having given the Name of *God* to the Supreme Maker of all things, hath herein laid down the *Goodness* of *God* as the Principle and Cause of the Creation of the World. This Reflection of *Irenaeus* takes place with respect to the other two Divine Properties, which *Plato* ranks among the Causes of the World; so that we may say that *Plato* having call'd the first Author of all things, the *God*, the *Reason* and *Soul* of the World, hath thereby laid down *as the Principle of the Creation of the Universe*, the *Goodness*, *Wisdom*, and *Power* of *God*.

But the best Interpreter of this *Platonick Trinity* is *Galen*, in his third Book *de Usu Partium*; his Words are plain, and may be call'd the right Key of *Platonism*: "I do not, says he, make true Religion and Piety towards God to consist in sacrificing *Hecatombs*, or in sending up the Smoke of much Incense, but in knowing and making known to others what God's *Wisdom*, *Power* and *Goodness* are. For, in my opinion, that God has been pleas'd to fill the World with so many good things, is a Mark of his *Goodness*, which deserves our utmost Praise: That he has found the way of putting it into so good Order, is the highest pitch of *Wisdom*; and that he could execute so vast a design, is the effect of Almighty *Power*. Nothing is plainer than this Comment: He fully explains the Doctrine of the Three Principles, without mixing any Philosophical Subtleties; or Cabalistick Mysterie, with it. Here all refers to the Creation of the World, and shews no more than a natural Trinity, which all may read in these three admirable Properties, which God has, if I may so speak, made visible in his Works.

And lastly *Clem. Alexan.* (*Lib. 5. Strom. p. 547. Edit. Latet. 1629.*) fully shews *Plato's* mind in the Definition he gives of the *Word*: ὁ λόγος, &c. "The *Word* of the Father of all things, says he, is not that which was utter'd (ὁ ἐρευθεὶς), but a *most evident Wisdom* and *Goodness* of *God*, with an *Almighty* and *truly Divine Power*." This is plain, here you have the *Wisdom*, *Goodness* and *Power*, whereof *Plato* made his Three Principles, and whereof *Clemens* makes only the *internal Word*, the *Word of the Father*, in opposition to the *utter'd Word*. So free and unlimited is this Allegorical Philosophy. Observe farther, That the words *most evident*, refer to what appears of *God* in the *Creation of the World*, which is properly the *Word of God* according to all the *Platonical Allegories*.

As to the *Begotten Word*, which is not that *Wisdom*, nor that *Goodness*, nor that *Power*, which was manifested in the Creation of the World, what can it be but the *World* it self? Nevertheless, the Fathers believ'd the Prolation of this *Word* to be the *true Generation*; and consequently, when they spake of a *Begotten Son*, understood it of this *World*, with-

out thinking of it. *Plato*, then, having so *personaliz'd* the several Operations of the Godhead, spake of many Gods to please the People, *Populo ut placenter quo fecisset fabula*; referring to himself the liberty of owning but one God, when he convers'd with the Learned, or, as appears by his Epistles, when he wrote to his Friends.

## C H A P. VIII.

*That the Pleroma of the Valentinians was an Allegorical Theology: With a Digression concerning the Fanaticism of both the Antient and Modern Gnosticks.*

I pass from the Philosophers to the Heretics who imitated them. It is certain that there was a hidden and mystical Theology in the *Pleroma* of the *Valentinians*. That prodigious number of *Emanations*, which seems so monstrous an Opinion to us, was, at bottom, but either a System of the several Orders of Angels, who are often call'd *Aeons*; I mean such a Celestial Hierarchy as that of *Dionysius* was: or that Collection of *Ideas*, those different Properties (*Auditus*, as *Valentinus* calls them, *apud Iren.* l. 1. c. 5.) those several Dispensations, which they conceiv'd in one and the same God. For they did consider him, s. without regard to the Creature, as incomprehensible, and retri'd into a profound Silence; that is, as not having yet spoken that efficacious *Word* which was to make the Creature: and then he call'd him the *Profound* and the *Silence*; that was the first Order of *Aeons*. 2. They consider'd God with respect to the intelligible World, as having his *Understanding* fill'd with *Ideas*, Ideas being the Essence and the Truth of things, according to the *Platonists*: and then they call'd him the *Understanding* and the *Truth*; that was their second *Syzygy*. 3. They con-

sider'd God with respect to the sensible World, as executing his Design, and speaking that powerful *Word*, which gave Life and Being to all Creatures: and then they call'd him the *Word* and the *Life*, that was their third *Syzygy*. 4. They consider'd God with respect to the *Spiritual* and *Evangelical* World, as working Redemption; and there they found the Mediator, *Jesus Christ Man.* with the new *Church*, which he made by his Preaching and Death: and then they call'd him the *Man*, and the *Church*; that was their fourth Alliance. But after all, these several *Emanations*, rightly taken, are but the several Respects in which they conceived one and the same God, who having been hid in an Abyss of Light, did outwardly manifest himself in these two admirable Works of the Old and New Creation.

That is the Testimony which *Irenaeus*, l. 2. c. 15. gives of them. "The *Valentinians*, says he, after having divided their *Emanations*, did however return to the Unity, holding that all together made but one. And in lib. 1. c. 6. the same Father's relating that *Ptolemy* gave the most High God two Wives, *Understanding* and *Will*, which they

they called the Father's two Powers, apparently shews, that *Ptolemy* fell into *Plato's Allegory*, in ascribing *Wisdom* and *Power*, as two Properties inseparable from one and the same Spirit, to the *Good*, or *Creator* of all things : And I don't see why *Ptolemy* might not as well Allegorically say, that this supreme Father had two Wives; as *Philo*, in the like case, that the World had *God* for its Father, and *Knowledge* for its Mother.

But if all these several *Powers* of the *Valentinians* did not destroy the Unity of God, whence then comes it, you'll say, that their *Doctrine* was so absurd? The reason is apparent, viz. That in avoiding the Christian Simplicity, they ruin the Faith into terrible Confusion, exposing God's Unity to Peril by their idle Speculations.

As for the *Basilidians*, they did also allegorize on the word *Abraxas*, whereby they understood that Supreme Power from which all the other *Eons* or Spirits proceeded. This Name has in its Greek Letters the Number 365, which is that of the Days of the Year; or, according to *Basilides*, of the Celestial Orbs. And he intended to signify that *Abraxas*, or the most High God, was the Father of the Celestial Orbs, Ages, or *Eons*, and Creator of the Universe. 'Tis probable that this is a *Hebrew* Word, and that it comes from *Ab*, *Ben*, *Ronach*, *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*. *Menage* would, with his Etymological Sagacity, find no difficulty in proving this to be its Derivation; thus, *Ab*, *Ben*, *Ronach*, *Abenrach*, *Aberach*, *Abrach*; and, adding a *Greek* Termination, *Abracas*, *Abraxas*. *Serenus* the Physician, of the Sect of the *Basilidians*, lengthening the Word, fram'd *Abraxadabra* of it; which is another mysterious Name, which he made use of as an *Amulet*, or *Preservative*, for the Cure of all intermitting Fevers; almost as the Superstitious use some Words of the beginning of St. John's Gospel, which they hang about the Patient's Neck, as I my self have seen. Now in as much as

the *Basilidians* pass for the first Authors among Christians of the Discipline of the *Secret*, and of the *Platonick* Trinity, it is very likely that they design'd to hide it under this Allegorical and Symbolical Name. But it is also possible that this Name contains only the *Gospel-Trinity* of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whereon they allegoriz'd extravagantly, according to the Custom of that Time.

By this Essay which we have been making, it sufficiently appears, that we could give a rational Meaning to the other Orders of the *Eons*, wherewith the *Gnosticks* did also enlarge their System. With a little labour in taking off the Veil of Allegory, which covers the hidden Meaning of this mysterious Theology, one might easily enough discover, that the true aim of these Christian Philosophers was to set off the lowness of the *Gospel* by the suppos'd depths of their *Mysteries*. But we'll go no farther on this Article: The Sample given is sufficient. But if any one desires proof of this our Explication of *Valentin's Eons*, that he conceiv'd them only as the several Affections of the Divine Understanding, or as so many Dispensations of Providence, let him but consult Chap. 12. of *Danaus de Heresib.* To be brief, we'll here quote only the famous *Pearson* (*Vindic. Ignat. Par. 2. c. 5.*) " *Valentin*, says he, made " an open Profession of believing but " one God: and tho' *Tertullian* asserts " somewhat Rhetorically that this Hertick believ'd as many Gods as he " number'd *Eons*, that Father himself " did nevertheless own, that *Valentin's* " *Eons* were nothing else but the Divine Properties and Affections, whereof " his Disciples afterwards made Personal " Substances. *Gallafius* had, before *Pearson*, observ'd the same thing (*in Annotat. in lib. 1. Irenai*) for he recites the Words of *Tertullian*. " *Ptolemy*, says that Father, follow'd *Valentin's* Doctrine, only he made Personal Substances, subsisting distinctly from God, of what *Valentin* had consider'd only as Affections

" and Ideas internal and intimate to the  
" Godhead.

Irenaeus also informs us, that by these *Æons* Valentin understood only certain *Dispositions* and *Powers* of the most High God, (*Summi Dei diuinissimæ rationis qualia-*  
*dam, ex diuiduisque*) which he clearly explains in his L. 1. c. 6. where he relates the System of the discreet *Valentinians*: " When, say they, the Supreme God would produce any thing, he was in that respect call'd *Father*; but because his Productions are true, he was at the same time called the *Truth*: and then, when he woud produce and manifest himself, he was called the *Man*. The *Man*, by speaking begat the *Word*, which is the first-born *Son*. All which shews that Allegory being undetermined, every one took it the way which best pleas'd him: But however, it appears that they all agree that these *Æons* are nothing else but God's several *Affections* or *Diversifications*. What's peculiar in this last Hypothesis, is, that *Man*, which signifies *God*, manifesting himself, utters the *Word*, his First-born. Which yet has a good Sense, according to *Mark* the *Valentinian*, who in Chap. 10. of the same Book says, " That God, to give a visible Form to the invisible Grand-dures which are in him, utter'd his *Word* like himself. Understanding by the *Word* only the visible Form, which God takes to manifest himself in. So our *Quakers* understand no more by the *Word* than the Goodness of the Supreme God manifesting himself to Men.

This was the Opinion of the *Sabellians*, who by the *Christ* did not any way understand a *Man*, but only Divine Clemency and Heavenly Aid manifesting it self to Men in the Work of Redemption. It may perhaps also have been the Opinion of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who, as we have already seen, calls the *Word*, the most manifest *Goodness of God*. That of *Origen*, and of many other Allegorists; does not at all differ from it, since they did not so much believe in the Son of

*Mary*, as in their *Theologick'd Son*, as they speak; much slighting Faith and the sensible Gospel, as we shall shew hereafter, and valuing only *Contemplation*. This *Platonick Fanaticism* has *Cerinthus* for its Author, who carefully distinguish'd Jesus the Son of *Mary* from this *Christ*, or this Celestial Aid, which came to enlighten and guide Men; and it is now adopted by Father *Malebranche*, Dr. *More*, and Mr. *Norris*.

This last is a right *Platonick Fanatic*, who has brought disorder and confusion into both the Speculative part of Religion, and the Duties of Christian Piety. His several Treatises of Doctrine and of Morality, shew that the Dreams of a contemplative Man are capable of converting the most sensible Lights of Reason and Revelation into Smoak. Can we forbear judging of what he has written of the *ἀρχὴ* of *Plato*, as we judg of what he has written concerning the Love of God, which he makes to consist in such refin'd Contemplations and Enthusiasms as render Gospel-Morality (tho' of it self so plain and natural) wholly impracticable. Fanaticism all over! And if we see it in the Morality of these Visionaries, why do we not perceive that their strain'd *Platonism* is no less the fruit of *Mystical Theology*? The Fathers were right *Quakers* in their System of the *ἀρχὴ*; and if we will not be *Quakers* in point of Morality, let us keep close to our Principles, and neither be so in the Doctrine of the *Word*; and such other speculative Points as have been render'd incomprehensible by too much refining of them. If I may say what I think, this Gallimaufry about the *Divine Word*, which is defin'd, (See the Treatise initial'd, *Reason and Religion*) " An intelligible World, Archetype and Ideal, or even the Essence of God, as far as it is variously imitable, variously exhibitive and representative of all things which exist. This Cart, I say, is suspected by me, and I am tempted to believe, that under these specious Names,

Names, nothing more is given us than a fair System of my Understanding, with its Reason and Ideas ; or to speak better, its universal and unchangeable Natures, which the Philosophers call'd the Reality and Truth of things, and whereof they made even the Essence of God. Yea, I dare venture to say, that 'tis Deism or Arational disquis'd. The Accusation is heinous, and requires Proofs of the utmost evidence. Well, and we shall produce them. Read and weigh these Words. (*ubi supra*, p. 209.) that Author says, "The Idea of a Triangle has a determinate and immutable Nature, " such as it is not in my power to make it the least alteration in, — which is a certain Proof that it is not of my making, for then it would be arbitrary, and I might change it as I please'd ; but that it is an absolute Nature, distinct from and independant of my Understanding : And to say the truth, it is nothing else than the Essence of God himself modify'd, and as it is exhibitive and imitable in such and such a manner, since nothing is absolutely immutable but God himself ; he alone being that Father of Lights, in whom there is no shadow of turning.

This is plain : The Idea of a Triangle is nothing else but the very Essence of God modify'd, in such a manner. Again, the Idea of an Owl is only this Divine Essence so modify'd, the Idea of a Lobster is still but a Modification of this Divine Essence, in a word, the Idea of all Beings is nothing else than the very Essence of God modify'd in such or such a manner : *Jupiter est quocunque vides, quocunque movebis.* What do you call that ? It's however on such fine Discoveries that these Gentlemen value themselves, confidently and triumphantly laying, So true it is, that true Platonism is a good Preservative against Socinianism. Yes, say I, but under a pretence of preserving us from Socinianism, we are rudely robb'd of Christianity. Let's once

more venture to speak as we think. *Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch,* with many others of venerable Rank and Antiquity, whom out of respect I do not name ; these Fathers, whom our Moderns imitate with so much affectation, consider'd the Christian Religion only as a new Sect of Philosophy, which under low and popular Similitudes, contain'd the most hidden Sense and profoundest Mysteries of all sorts of natural and divine Sciences ; whereon they gave themselves free scope, and explain'd the Scriptures, not as Interpreters, but as sophistical Speculative Philosophers, pretending to find *Plato's* Mysteries in certain Terms, much as our Chymists pretend they find their Art in *Genesis*, or in the History of the Creation. *Cabalæ* every where.

I shall be exclaim'd against, as abusing those Great Men, but wrongfully. All our Critics say worse of them than that. For not to mention *Daille, Huetius, and Petavius*, who are not thought their Friends ; Dr. *Bull* will suffice, as he is indisputably one of their greatest Admirers, and if we may say it, their pension'd Apologists ; his Testimony will be worth ten thousand o-

ther. \* He says of *Ori-* \* *Pervige his gen,* "That he sometimes Defence of "spake too freely, and the Council like a Sceptick : Of

*Tertullian,* "That he

"little car'd how he spake of God, pro- "vided he did but contradict his Adver- "sary, and that an Egg's not more like an Egg, than the Expressions, of "that Father resemble the extravag- "ant Conceits of *Valentin* : Of *Lactan-*

*tius,* "That he was but a Rhetor, igno-

"rant in Theology : Of *S. Clem.*

"That he was but a Jester and a Sceptist. Indeed there are scarce any of 'em whom he has not a fang at, when he's not pleased with their Theology. Their *Arian* or *Gnostic* Expressions give him so much trouble, that it puts him almost always out of humour. What might we not say

of their poor Interpretations of Scripture? They went strangely to work on it, if we may believe St. Jerom. Mons. *Le Clerc* recites two Passages of him, which will come in very properly here; one of them is in *Tom. X.* p. 492. where that Father says (*in Apl. pro lib. cont. Iovin.* p. 106. & seq. Ed. Gryph.)

" Tis one thing to write in order to dispute, and another to write for Instruction. In the former Method, " Dispute is very extensive, and the endeavour is only to answer the Adversary. Now this is propos'd then, that —— we speak in one manner and act in another, &c. In the latter an open and ingenuous Behaviour is necessary, &c. *Origen, Methodius, Eusebius* and *Apollinaris*, have written much against *Celsus* and *Porphyry*. Observe what Arguments and what doubtful Problems they make use of, to overthrow the Writings compos'd by the Spirit of the Devil. And that because they are necessitated to say, not what they think, but what the Dispute requires (*non quod sentiunt, sed quod necesse est*) they contradict the Gentiles. The other Passage may be found in the *XII Tom.* of the *Bib. Univ.* p. 146. and is taken out of St. Jerom's Letter to *Nepotian.* p. 14. " I was," says he, once desiring *Gregory Nazianzen*, who was formerly my Master, to explain to me what was meant by the " Second first Sabbath in St. Luke; he pleasantly answered me, I'll inform you concerning that in the Church, where, when all the People are giving me their Acclamations, you The constrain'd to know what you do not know, or if you alone are silent, you'll be accounted a Fool.

To have yet more convincing Proofs of the pitiful manner of the Fathers explaining the Scriptures, one need but

see their Puerile Interpretations of these Words, *regnavit a ligno Deus,*<sup>\*</sup> which they apply to the Cross of Jesus Christ: and on many other Texts, whence they subeletly draw *Plato's λόγος*. They are no more than a Train of flat and forc'd Explications, as that which they give of these Words, *ex utero te genui*, &c. Again, see how *Tertullian* makes, what *David* said of the *Palm-Tree*, fit to a *Phoenix*. The Hebrew Word is not equivocal, and it's likely that *Tertullian* was deceiv'd by the double sense of the Greek Word: No, 'twas designedly that he played upon it, not seeking so much the sense of the Scripture, as an opportunity of finding in the Scriptures one of the greatest Wonders Paganism ever spake of. Neither were the Fathers so ignorant in the Scriptures, but that a little good Judgment would have shewn them the natural Signification of these Words, *eructavit cor meum*, &c. It is not God the Father, but *David* who there speaks; however they were willing upon occasion, to find the sublimest Doctrine of *Plato's* School in this ordinary expression of Scripture, or make the Heathens believe, that there was nothing so great in their Philosophy, Which was not hidden in those Scripture Expressions, which to us seem plainest and least mysterious.

But Dr. *Bull* finds admirable Expedients to save the Reputation of the Fathers. He distinguishes between the *Witnesses of the Faith*, and the *Interpreter of the Scriptures*; and always taking for granted, that they are good Witnesses of the Faith, he grants that they are sometimes bad Interpreters of Scripture; which is respectfully stabbing them with a Dagger. So in pag. 140. alledging for Proof of the Divinity of the *Holy Ghost*, a Passage out of *Irenæus*, where that Father mistakenly quotes the Prophet *Isaiah*: " We do not trouble our selves," says he, with *Irenæus's* bad Interpretation; for we are not consulting that Father as an Interpreter, always happy

\* The English Testament hath it, the Second Sabbath after the Epiph.

" in explaining the Scripture, but as an irreproachable Witness of Apostolical Tradition. I confess bad Interpreters may be good Witnesses of the Faith of their Age. But it must at the same time be granted me, that the Faith whereof they testify, is a too much suspected Faith, when it depends on the Evidence of so bad Interpreters. I say bad, for it is not only one or two Passages mistaken by these Doctors which we are speaking of, but a Million. Dr. Bull himself owns some of them concerning the *Holy Ghost*; how many would there be, if we should collect those which they have misapply'd concerning the *Word*?

But what do I say, That bad Interpreters may nevertheless be good Witnesses of the Faith of their Age? Mons. le Vaffor in his *Traité de l'Examen*, ch. I. p. 10. is not so ready to grant it; he denies, and I believe he's in the right, That any Advantage can be had from the Testimony of the Antiques, towards the Decision of the Points now controverted, because of the Confusion which arose from their Philosophy: "Origen and St. Austin, says he, have so perplex'd Theology, one in the Eastern and the other in the Western Churches, where they both had their Disciples and Admirers, by endeavouring to adjust Christianity to Philosophy; that we meet with a thousand Difficulties in determining what those two Authors, and those who have follow'd their Steps, really thought on several important points of Religion. They give nothing but Allegorical Senses to the Texts of the Holy Scripture; their Explications appear so very far distant from what the Sacred Writers meant, that one knows not where to begin, to disentangle the true Doctrine of the Apostles, from the particular Speculations of the greatest part of those, to whom we are sent as to irreproachable Witnesses of what was believ'd in their time. If it be so, I don't see that Justin and Ireneus can be

better Interpreters of the Scripture than Origen and St. Augustin: they were not less corrupted by Philosophy, nor less confus'd and perplex'd; and consequently they cannot be good Witnesses of what was believ'd in their Time: For how is it possible to distinguish the sound Doctrine of the Apostles in their Writings from their Platonic Speculations?

Let us therefore without hesitation, rank all these fine contemplative Men, as well Antient as Modern, in the order of the *Gnosticks*, and return to treat of them. Lastly, Clemens Alexandrinus (*Strom. I. 5. p. 587. Edit. Lutet. 1629.*) explaining that Text of St. John, *The only Son who is in the Bosom of the Father*, gives us plainly to understand what was the Language of the *Valentinians*: "St. John, says he, having called the invisible and unspeakable Excellencies of the Godhead, the *Bosom of the Father*, some have thence taken occasion to name him the *Profound* (*Baōūr*) as containing all things in his *Bosom*, and being impenetrable and infinite. Novatian reciting the same Text (*de Trinit. c. 26.*) quotes it twice in the same Chapter thus, *The Son hath revealed the Bosom of the Father to us*. Tertullian *adv. Prax. c. 8.* did the same, that is, in the *Valentinian* manner: That the Son hath revealed to us the impenetrable Depths of the Father. Read the 5<sup>th</sup> Heresy of *Epiphanius*, in the 22d and 28th Chapters, where may be distinctly seen that *Valentin*'s Fable of the thirty *Ans*, was allegorically taken from the Scriptures.

Some may perhaps wonder, that they so dispos'd their Deities by Couples: They therein imitated the Heathens, who attributed both Sexes to each of their false Gods (*Repades Lett. Tom. I. p. 84.*) But however that be, it ought not to seem strange to those who know that they allegoriz'd. *Simeon*, tho a Christian and a Bishop, made no scruple to call God Male and Female (*Hymn. 2. &c. 3. Θεον γαρ απεινειν διδοσθειν, ου γε Σημαντος,*

*ous, tu Mors, tu Femina*) (an Opinion so much blam'd by *Lactantius in Orpheus*, l. 4. c. 8.) He calls him also, " That which brings forth, and which is brought forth, the Father of himself, Son of himself, and to conclude, Father of the *Aions*. *Valentinus* himself would not have said more. His fourth Hymn is diverting; He there sets the whole Trinity to work on the Begetting of the Son, particularly the *Holy Ghost*, whom he brings in as a mediating Power, to be assistant to the Father and the Son. For after having said to the latter, " I praise you with the Father and with you, I praise that other Fruit, which the Father could not hinder himself from putting forth, when he intended to produce you: He speaks to the *Holy Ghost* thus; " It is of you I speak, secund Wisdom, mediating Principal, holy Respiration, Center of the Father, and also Center of the Son; you may be called altogether Mother, Sister and Daughter; you came to the assistance of the Father, who could not beget his Son without you (*obstetricata es additam radicem*:) For the Father designing to pour himself into the Son, that pouring was the Bud of a Third, who was a Medium between the Father and the Son. You see Poets are not very scrupulous, neither were their Imitators the *Valentinians* any more so than they.

*Syeneius* was not without Company in expressing himself like the *Valentinians*: If his Hymns are full of these Cabalistic Terms, the *Profound*, the *Silence*, the *Ineffable*, &c. (*εύθεος, οὐχιά, ἀγέντος, αἰνίων, αἴραντος*) we find also the same Cant in many other *Platonick Fathers*. Do they speak of the incomprehensible Nature of God? you presently see the *Profundity* and the *Silence*, Are they to say, how God passed from that State of Silence to a State of Revelation? You shall there see every where this inseparable Pair of *Aions*, the Inter-

nal *Word*, and the *Uttered-Word*. *Clemens* and *Origen* expressly distinguish the *Word-God* from another *Word*, which was made *Flesh*. In short, nothing so much resembles the *Gnostick Heresy*, as *Tertullian's* two Gods, the *Rationalis* and the *Sermonalis*, the *Rational God*, and the *sonorous and speaking God*. One may also range in the same Category, the *Verbum silens*, and the *Verbum sonans* of *Marius Victorinus*: And many other chimerical Ideas of the Antients, which tho they would be tolerable in a figurative and allegorical Style, yet become insupportable and worse than *Valentinus's Aions*, by being personaliz'd, and made Spirits distinct from the supreme God.

This is the Case: Some Philosophers in endeavouring to avoid the Opinions of the *Ebionites*, thereby fell into so ridiculous an extreme, as to reject the God and the Messiah of the *Jews*; They spake ill of the God who had given the Law, and pretended (*Irenaeus l. 1. c. 25.*) that the *Christ* was the Son of another superior God; and therefore apply'd themselves to sublime Generations of the Substance of the most High God, and to other such extravagant Conceits: which the Orthodox greedily embracing out of hatred of the *Jews*, and of *Judaizing Heretics*; at first they were only mystical fables, to set off the Glory of *Jesus Christ*, but afterwards these metaphorical Generations degenerated to real Generations; and what had at first been conceiv'd only as Operations and Powers, was converted into *Hypostases* and Personal Substances.

To conclude; as I make no difference between the *Jewish Cabals*, and the *Valentinian Pleroma*; these two Systems are either equally ridiculous, if examined according to the strict literal sense, or equally rational, if you seek in them the concealed sense, which lies under the Bark of Allegory. For 'twas indeed the same Infatuation for Allegory, which drew the *Jews* as well as *Christian Heretics* into this Cabalistical Philosophy,

the outside whereof appears to us so very extravagant and whimsical. The one compos'd their *Pleroma* of certain Pairs of *Eons*. The other do as much with their *Sephiroth*, or *Enumerations*, which they range by two and two. We cannot then say otherwise either of the *Jews* or *Valentinians*, than that under these Theological Fictions, they design'd to conceal their true Doctrine concerning Cosmogony and the Origin of things. Those *Eastern Philosophers* never believed that the World was made out of nothing: Creation out of nothing was then unheard of. As they held that all Substance that is in the World had always existed, and that the first Cause included all other Natures, in the Immensity of its own; they understood by their *Sephiroth* only the *Emanations* of all Beings from the substance of the supreme Being. And as *Emanations* are of two kinds, one of which respect the sensible World, and the other the intelligible; by the first they intended to express only the several Forms of all Creatures, which are as so many *Emanations* from the first Substance; and by the other, they designed to represent the Ideas of the Divine Understanding, which are the *Emanations* of Eternal Wisdom, which they call'd Exemplars, the Instruments and Means of the Creator's Power. So that one cannot doubt, but that with a little Application, one might discover in the Cabalistick *Emanations*, either the diverse Dispensations of Providence, or the essential Properties of the Creator; and particularly the three which gave birth to the *Platonick Trinity*, *Goodness*, *Wisdom* and *Power*, which are in effect found among the ten Divine Names, whereof their *Sephiroth* are compos'd. For after all that has been said, 'twere obstinacy not to own, That what's to be born with in the *Jewish Cabal*, and which is rashly applied to the Christian *Trinity*, is borrow'd from *Plato's Cosmo-*

*gony*, and taken from the grounds of the soundest and antientest Philosophy concerning the Origin of the World. So that one may, without fear of mistaking, assert that the Cabal is nothing else but a Mixture, which has been made of *Jewish Superstitions* with *Platonick Speculations*. As to the rest, consisting in the Science or Mystery of Numbers, of Points, Syllables and Letters, which they pretend to have taken from certain Books ascrib'd to *Esdras*; it's what we call the Visions and Dreams of those People.

When all is done, what could Protestants gain, in citing against us the *Cabala* and Writings of the *Rabbins*? Do not the Papists make use of the same Authority to support their *Transubstantiation*? For in truth, 'tis just as much found there as the Trinity is. 'Tis easy finding all sorts of Mysteries in those Obscurities. What do Protestants say when those *Chimera's* are objected to them? You need but read the Dialogues, where Dr. *Stillingfleet* compares the *Trinity* with *Transubstantiation*. He extricates himself very well (p. 32. of the first Part) in rejecting this Cabal, as having no Authority. There *Galatinus* is treated as a Plagiary, and as an Author who ought not to find any Credit among civilized People. The pretended *Rabbins*, who lived before the Coming of *Jesus Christ*, are made a jest: And it's justly supposed, that the *Jews* cannot reckon that among their Doctrines, which is one of their strongest Objections against Christianity. Ah! good God, and is not the Trinity likewise one of that sort of Objections, which the *Jews* make against Christians? By what machine shall we then make it one of their Doctrines? Shall *Galatinus* have more Authority, to make us receive that as a known Doctrine of the *Jews*, than *Transubstantiation*? and shall the Paraphrases be more ancient, and the *Cabala* more authentick, when used in dis-

dispute against the *Socinians*, than *desty or Honesty, secundum currentis Temporalis*

## C H A P. IX.

## Plato's System explain'd.

I Return to the System of *Plato*, which I shall endeavour to unfold. That Philosopher admitted of three sorts of Divine Essences, which he call'd *three Principles or three Gods*. The first is the Supreme God, to whom the two others owe Honour and Obedience, because he is their Father and their Creator. The second is the *visible God*, Minister of the invisible, and Creator of the World. The third is called the *World*, or the *Soul* which animates the World, to whom some give the Name of *Demon*. To return to the second, which he also nam'd the *Word, Understanding, or Reason*; he conceiv'd two sorts of *Words*, one which dwelt in God from all Eternity, whereby God did from all Eternity inclose all sorts of Virtues in his Bosom, doing all things with *Wisdom, with Power, and with Goodness*: For being infinitely perfect, he hath, in this *internal Word*, all the Ideas, and Forms of created Beings. The other *Word*, which is the *external and uttered Word*, is, according to him, nothing else than Substance which God put forth from his Bosom, or which he *begat* to frame the Universe by it. It is in this respect that *Mercurius Trismegistus* said that the World is *consubstantial* with God. And it is remarkable that *Irenaeus*, tho a Christian, says of Matter, what the other Fathers have said of the *Word* only, "That God utter'd it, and put it forth. (*Lib. 2. Cap. 29.*) He followed the above-noted Principles of *Plato*. *Bp Hus* ascribes the same

Opinion to *Origen* (*Origen. Quest. 2.*) That the Matter which God made use of to form the World by, was from all Eternity emanated from his own Substance.

Many of *Plato's Disciples* having embrac'd Christianity, they fail'd not to attribute to *Jesus Christ* all that this Philosophy attributed to the *second God*, and particularly the *Creation of the World*, maintaining that *Jesus Christ* was this *second Nature* of their Divine *Plato*, who had existed before the Creature, and had received order from his Father to produce it from Nothing: That this *Word* had since appear'd to the *Patriarchs*, as the Minister of the most High God; and that at last having assum'd a Body in the Womb of the Virgin *Mary*, he had preached the *Gospel* to Men. They thought they should thereby infinitely raise the Honour of the *Messiah*, and draw the *Platonists* the more easily to the Christian Religion: Besides that, twould have been grievous to them, that, after having studied so long, and made so fine a Figure in *Plato's School*, it should be said that they had studied in vain.

'Tis easy producing Proofs of this from both Philosophers and Christians. As to the former, one need but read *Timaeus Locus*, from whence *Plato* had his Doctrine. That ancient Philosopher (*De Anima Mundi*) first supposes a most good Principle, whom he calls *God*: Then he distinguishes three Orders of Things, 1. The *Idea or Form*, which is eternal in God, and which is the *perpetual*

tual Pattern of all things begotten, and liable to change: That's the first Word, the internal and intelligible Word.

2. Matter, whereby he understands that Substance which God put forth out of himself, destitute of Form, which others have called the second Word, or the utter'd Word. 3. Having consider'd the Idea as the Father, and Matter as the Mother, he holds, that of these two Principles a third is fram'd, who is their Son, which he calls the Sensible, or the sensible World, to distinguish it from the intelligible, and which others have call'd the Soul (or Spirit) which animates the World, and the Order of Nature. Thence he concludes that there is but one World, that this World is the only Son of God (*μονογενὴς*) that it is perfect, that it is indu'd with a Soul, and with Reason (*τὸν διανοεῖσθαι τὸν λογικὸν*.) God, " says he, intending to produce a " most fair God, made him a begotten " God (*τὸν εποιεῖσθαι θεὸν γεννητὸν*.) Phurnutus gives the same Elogy to the World (C. 27. *De Natura Deorum*) " The " World, says he, is the only Son of " God (*μονογενῆς*).

The Author of *Mercurius Trismegistus* so exactly futes his Language to that of these Philosophers, that one cannot in the least doubt but that he designs to speak of the World under the Name of the Son of God, which he gives it. *Laetantius* suffer'd himself to be deceiv'd by it, according to the good Custom of the Fathers, who apply'd every thing to Jesus Christ, greedily receiving whatever seem'd to favour their Platoniz'd Christianity. This is the Passage, such as it is, in that Father (*Divin. Instit. I.4. c. 6.*) " The Lord, says Mercurius, and " the Creator of all things, whom " we call God, because he has made a " second visible and sensible God; this " Lord, I say, having made this the " first and the only one, he appear'd to " him beautiful, and full of all sorts of " good things, and he sanctified him, " and loved him as his only Son. He

who is not wilfully blind must here observe the sensible World, as the only Son of the Creator.

Now it is apparent that these Philosophers spake thus of the World, because they believ'd it created, in opposition to the Opinion of *Ocellus Lucanus*, who indeed holds, in his Book *de Universi Natura*, cap. 1. That the World was not begotten (*negat suisse genitum, γεννήσας*) And in the 2d Chapter he expressly says, that the World is unbegotten (*ingenitus, ἀγέννητος*) meaning that it is eternal, and that it never was created. Thence it is that those who follow'd the other Opinion, held that there was none but God who was unbegotten (*ingenitus, ἀγέννητος*) that as to the World, it was begotten, being the only Son of God. Hence came that famous distinction of the Platonists between the *ingenitus* and the *genitus*; having apply'd to the Father, and to the Son, what the Philosophers had laid of God and of the World, because they did not apprehend this Allegorical Philosophy, and had not read this Lesson of *Phurnutus*, (*ubi supra Cap. 35.*) That the Antients subtly Philosopiz'd on the Nature of the World by Symbols and Enigma's. *Salust* the Philosopher (*de Diis & Mundo, Cap. 2.*) calls these Enigma's *Theological Fables*; and the Commentator on this Philosopher observes on this Place, that *Plato* follow'd these Fables which belong to Theology, leaving those which contain the Mysteries of the ordinary Causes and Effects of Nature, to the Poets. It's among these Theological Fables that you'll find the ground of modern Theology, and of those fine Mysteries of the *Emperichoresis*, of the God of God, of Light of Light, and of a Son existing as soon as the Father. These Sources are to be found particularly in *Salust*, Cap. 2, & 13.

*Apuleius* is another of those who very well understood Plato's Doctrine. " *Pla-*" to, says he, (*De Dogmate Platonis*) " supposis three Principles of all things,

" God, Matter, and Forms, which he calls *Ideas* : God incorporeal and infable, who is the Creator and the Father ; Matter increatable, incorruptible and infinite, which is neither corporeal nor incorporeal ; and *Ideas*, that is to say, the Forms of things, which are simple, eternal, and incorporeal. Then he makes him divide into three Orders, what he calls the first Substances, viz. *God, Understanding, and the Soul*. Lastly he observes that *Plato* sometimes affirms, that the World is without Beginning, and sometimes that it had an Origin, and was begotten. Which does not imply any Contradiction, the intelligible Platonick World being eternal, but the sensible and corporeal World having been begotten.

It is the same with the *Word* : Some have said it was eternal, having taken its Eternity from the intelligible and ideal *World* : Others suppos'd, that there had been a time wherein it was not ; taking its beginning from the Origin of the visible *World*. And those who believ'd it eternal, agree, as you see very well, with those who believ'd it form'd in time, while the one intended to speak of the λόγος ἐνδιδότος, of the internal *Word* ; and the others of the λόγος περιπέμπωντος, of the begotten *Word* put forth when God intended to create the *World*. So true it is that the System of the *Word* was made by the Model of the System of the *World*. As to the *World*, this is the Observation of *Curio* (in fol. 35, &c. of his *Araeum*.) " If all things are eternal, the Opinion of

" the Peripatetics concerning the *World's* Eternity proves true : — For since God created the *World*, and that nothing strange or unexpected can happen to him, what Inconvenience is there in saying, that what was made in time was in him before all time ? God is of himself : The Beings which the Greeks call *Ideas*, and we call *Forms*, are so in God, that they are nothing in themselves. — Now before the *World* was made, it was nothing in it self, but in God, in that vast Nature, in that ideal Model, where all things always have been, and always are — The Presence of this Universe not being separable from the immense and eternal Wisdom of God. — To conclude, after the *World* was made, it had a double Existence, one in it self, with respect to all things existing in time ; another in God, because nothing can exist out of his Eternity and Wisdom. All which does in all respects agree with the *Word* : Before it was begotten or utter'd, it was nothing in it self, it had no *Hypostasis*, it subsisted only in God, in the Idea of that vast Nature in which all things have been from all Eternity : But after it was put forth, it had a double Being (or Existence) the one in God, as he is himself the Model and Archetype of all things which exist ; the other in it self, as it is the First-born of all Creatures. Whence it appears, that the *Arians* and *Athanasians* destroying each other in so brutal a manner as they did, was from a mere Mistake.

## C H A P. X.

## Philo Examin'd.

**W**E ought to rank *Philo* amongst the *Platonick Philosophers*, seeing it is certain that he follows exactly the Ideas of *Plato* about the *Word of God*: To be convinc'd hereof, you need only read his Book *de Tempulantia*, where he pusheth on very far his *Allegory* of a Spiritual Marriage between *God* and *Woman*, saying, that the latter was delivered of an only and well-beloved *Son*, that is the sensible *World*. He makes use of the same Expression in the Book of the *Life of Moses*, where he calls the *World*, the most perfect *Son* of *God*. One of our Authors (*Steph. le Moine in Notis ad Hippolyti Sermonem*) hath sincerely acknowledg'd this Truth: "It is true, saith he, "that *Philo* the Jew hath often spoke "of a λόγος; for he calls the Angels "the *Words* of *God*, and what is more, "he calls the *World* so (λόγον Θεόν.) But *Philo* borrow'd these ways of Expression from the *Platonists*: for dwelling at *Alexandria*, where there were many of these Philosophers, he took from their Opinions very many things which he inserted in his Writings. As to *Josephus*, his Studies were wholly different; for not having had any Commerce with the *Platonists*, you cannot discover in him that Genius and Inclination to *Allegory*, so much observ'd in *Philo*; so that we cannot trace any thing of a λόγος in him.

It is objected that *Philo* hath given the Name of *God* to the *Word* of *Plato*; which he had not done, if he had understood the *World* by it. "Tis remarkable, saith *Cudworth* in his *Intellect. Syst.* p. 549. that *Philo*, altho a great Enemy to *Polytheism*, doth not

" stick to call the *Divine Word*, according to the *Platonists*, a second *God*, Λύγη Θεόν, without thinking to thwart his Religion, and the first Commandment of *God*. But this Author excuseth *Philo* but ill, saying, "That the Commandment speaks only of created Gods, whereas *Philo* held his second *God* to be eternal, and consequently an uncreated *God*. It is absurd to think that a Jew would have admitted of a second uncreated *God*, as if there could be many uncreated." *Cudworth* over-lookes, that *Philo* speaking as a *Platonist*, allegorizeth upon the *intelligible World*, which he calls the second *God*, inasmuch as he looks upon it as an Emanation of the Divine Understanding; even as the Plan and the Idea of a Building is the Emanation of the Understanding of an Architect, that intends to build it according to this Image. Which is a Comparison very familiar to the *Platonicks*, as you will find it in *Philo himself*, in the beginning of his Book *de Mundi Opificio*. "The *intelligible World*, saith he, is nothing else but the *Word of God* preparing it self to create the *World*; even as an *intelligible City* is nothing else but the Reasoning of the Architect, that designs to build a City according to the Plan that he form'd of it in his Mind. Now can any one be ignorant that this *internal Word*, this *City*, or this *intelligible World*, are nothing else but the Understanding of the Architect, and consequently the Architect himself? From whence we discover the reason why *Philo*, who own'd the second *God* of the *Platonists*, would not platonize yet further, being unwilling to admit of their third *God*, for fear of contradicting his Religion,

which could not allow the created World to be a God, the *Platonists* calling it *toinqua*, a *Creature*. If he went no further, 'tis because he might carry on his *Allegory* so far as to the making of a second God of the Image which is in the Divine Understanding, and which is God himself: But he could not without danger carry it on as far as the *visible World*, which is a *Creature*, so as to make it a *third God*; seeing this *third God*, as *Petavius* remarks, (*Annot. ad Synef. in Calv. Encomium*) is nothing else in the opinion of the *Platonists*, and *Stoicks*, but the *sensible World* only, (*Cicero 2. de Natura Deor.*) And is the same that *Philo* calls the *only Son*, whose Father is God, and his Mother, Wisdom; which ought to be distinguisht from that other, which the same Author calls the *Word of God*, and the *intelligible World*. I say, the *Word*, this being the Name he always gives to the *intelligible World*, never calling it the *Son*, as he doth the *sensible World*. See *Maldon. in Job. 1. 1.*

But when *Philo* sometimes gives the Name of God to the *Soul of the World*, he understands by the *Soul of the World* no more, as *Cudworth* hath own'd, than the *Word* it self, or the *second God*, to whom he might give different Names, according to the diversity of Notions that he form'd, either of God, or of the *Wisdom*, or *Power*, &c. But however it be, 'tis always whilst he considers the thing in God, and never out of God, nor in the created World. In this same Sense St. John said, that the *Word* that made all things, was in God, and that the *Life* or the *Soul* was in that *Word*, not distinguishing at all the *Soul* from the *Word*, as the *Platonists* did.

You may judg by this whether Mr. Le *Elerc* had good ground to quote *Philo* in his Paraphrase upon St. John, as one of those who were not ignorant of the Mysterie of *Three* in the *Deity*. *Philo* having said first, That in the *literal Sense*, the three Men that appear'd to *Abraham* were three Angels, he afterwards goes on to the

hidden and *allegorick Sense*; where he saith, that it is God accompany'd by his two *Powers*, whereof the one is that *Power* that created the World, the other that *Wisdom* which conducts and governs it. "God, saith he, between these two Powers presents to an enlightened Soul sometimes one *Image* only, sometimes three: For our Soul feeleth but one *Image*, when being purifed by Contemplation, she raiseth her self above all Numbers, and advanceth to that pure and simple Idea, which is one, and independent of all others. On the contrary, the Soul considereth three of them, when not being as yet initiated in the *Mysteries* of the first Order, she stops at the smaller; viz, when not being capable of comprehending him who is consider'd in himself, and without any foreign Aid, she seeketh him in his several Relations of Creator and King. The *Mystery* of Three then, according to him, is for low Souls, who are not capable of comprehending God in his Unity, independently of all Creature, and that seek him in the Works of Creation and Providence. But the great *Mystery* of purified Souls, is to raise themselves, by a Contemplation transcending all Creatures, towards that only and simple Idea that hath nothing common with the rest.

Lastly he pretends that there is a third Sense, differing from that of the *Contemplation*, which he seems besides to call the Letter of the Scripture, according to which, 'tis he who is with his two Powers. But this last cannot be the *literal Sense*, seeing it would be contradictory to say, that in the *literal Sense* they were three Angels; and yet in the same Sense it was he who is with his two Powers. Besides, that by this means he would confound this last Sense with the second, which yet he distinguisheth carefully. We ought then to say, that this last Sense, if we would distinguish it well from the other two, must be the *Sense of the Economy*. That is to say, tha-

that they are indeed three Angels, but that the first of them bears the Name of *Jehova*, and represents his Person. It is for this reason he assures, that this Sense is agreeable to the Scriptures account, because it is the ordinary Stile of the Scripture, to give the Name of *Jehova* to that Angel in whom God hath put his Name. That Sense is not the *literal* one, which owns but three Angels only as to their Nature; nor the *Sublime* Sense, that finds there God himself with his sundry Relations of a *Creator* and *King*: But it is an *Oeconomical* Sense, which makes the first (who is but an Angel by his Nature) to be *Jehova* in respect to his Office, because he bears the Name of *Jehova*, and speaks by his Authority. Whereas the other two Angels are not consider'd here but as two Powers of the Supreme God; that is to say, as Ministers of him who represents *Jehova*. And as such they are sent to destroy *Sodom*, this Execution being beneath the Majesty of the first.

We need consult only *Philo* himself, to know what he understands by these Divine Powers, and to be convinc'd that he intends no Nicety whilst he makes them to be two or three; but follows the Text herein, which speaks here of three Angels. Elsewhere he reckons a greater Number of 'em: For in two other Books of his (*de Opificio & de Prodigis*) he gives us clearly to understand, that by the Powers wherewith God is accompanied, he means only Angels, seeing he makes them share the Creation of Man with the Supreme God; for this reason, because the Supreme God would not be the Author of what is evil in Man. He therefore left to the Angels the care of making the mortal part of his Soul, which is subject to Passions; reserving to himself alone the superior part, where Reason hath Dominion. It was in this sense, according to him, that God spake in the Plural, *Let Us make Man according to our Image*. You according to the Image of the Crea-

ture, in making him capable of Evil; but I according to the Image of the Deity, in making him capable of Good. And for the same reason he attributes sometimes the Creation of the World to this first Angel, whom he calls the *Word*, or the *Son of God*, supposing always that this Work, how excellent soever in it self, yet was beneath the Divine Majesty, and that God could not put his hand to it without injuring his Greatness. Could so able a Philosopher as *Philo* be capable of giving a Task, which he thought unworthy of God, to Powers which he thought to be equal to, and of the same Nature with him?

Now to return to the Text we examine, let us say that they are three Angels in the *literal* Sense; and that in the two other Senses, it is he who is with his two Powers: But we must take heed of a double meaning in the second Sense, viz. that of the *Allegory*, he who is with his two Powers, denotes God himself with his sundry Operations: whereas in the third Sense, which is the *Oeconomical* one, the same Terms signify only him who bears the Name of God with two other Angels, that serve him as Ministers. Thus you see the three Interpretations of *Philo* explain'd, the which it seems Mr. *Le Clerc* understood not. The first hath nothing that is *Platonical*, but is purely an *Historical* Sense, viz. that three Angels in a Human Shape preferr'd themselves to *Abraham*. The third hath nothing of *Platonism* neither, it is a *Theological* Sense, to wit, the Sense of all the *Jews*, and of all the *Christians*, who understand the antient Dispensation. The 2d that remains, is not *Platonical* neither, if you take it with *Philo*, *allegorically*; that is, in an arbitrary Sense, wherein the Letter of the Scripture is rais'd to Speculations and Ideas, that have no Foundation, or any reality in the Text. This last Interpretation of *Philo* would be truly *Platonical*, if he understood by the Three he speaks of, either three *Hypotheses*, or three distinct Persons,

Persons, whereas he understands there but one only Person under three different respects, to wit, God consider'd either in himself, be who is ; or in relation to us, inasmuch as he is our Creator and our King. This is what Philo calls the *Jehova with his two Powers*. One might indeed call this a *Platonical Sense*, provided *Plato* be understood as he ought,

who under the *Allegory* of three Hypostases, design'd to inform us of nothing else, but only an All-good, All-wife, and All-powerful God, both in the Creation and the Government of the World. But then the Authority of *Plato* and *Philo*, who are quoted as having spoken of three *Distinctions* in the Deity, will become useless to the Trinitarians.

## C H A P. XI.

*That all those commonly call'd Hereticks did believe a pre-existent Word, and in what sense.*

I Told you that the *Unitarians* quarrel not at all with the allegorical Sense of *Philo*, who doth not suppose three Hypostases, but only three Divine Relations, or God with his two Powers. *Ruarus* in his Epistles (Part I. p. 296.) owns a pre-existent  $\lambda\beta\gamma\Theta$ , which created the World, and dwelt in J. C. "The Fathers, saith he, who liv'd before the Council of Nice, held a pre-existent  $\lambda\beta\gamma\Theta$ ; but notwithstanding, they believ'd not that this  $\lambda\beta\gamma\Theta$  was the Supreme God and Creator of the World, but a Spirit flowing from him, when he went about to create the World; and which subsisted in him till then.—We differ not much from this Opinion, for we willingly own, that an extraordinary Spirit of God did inseparably unite it self to J. C. from the very moment of his Conception, and was, as it were, incorporated with him: A Spirit, say I, which existed in God before his Conception, and even from Eternity. Nay, if any one will have it by any means, that this Spirit, by whom J. C. perform'd the Work of the New Creation, is the same that created this Universe, we shall not contest his Opinion.

He is in the right: For where is that Unitarian, I pray you, who owns not an internal Word, and an eternal Reason, which always subsisted in God, and which is God himself (as Mr. Le Clerc expresseth it in his Paraphrase) which also dwelt in J. C? I shall not except even the *Alogi*, so call'd, because they rejected the *Platonick Word*, subsisting out of God himself, and having an Hypostasis distinct from that of the Father: But they never denied, that, in the Hypostasis of the Father, there was not a Reason, a Word, or Operation, that created the World, and which insinuated it self into the Flesh of J. C. It was indeed said of them, that they absolutely rejected the Word, but it was with the same Justice and Candor, as some Moderns assert, that the *Divine Grace* is denied, when it is only their *irresistible Grace* that is rejected, which they have been pleas'd to conceit as such. *Sandius*, who maintain'd a Word brought forth, and stood for the Hypostases, yet owns (*Nucl. Hist. Eccl. lib. 1.*) that *Marcellus, Photinus, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata*, and even *Ebion*, who believ'd only an Hypostasis of the Father, held, notwithstanding, that in that Hypostasis alone, there were two Energies,

or

or Divine Operations, to wit, the *Word*, and the *Holy Spirit*; and that by these two Operations, God created the World, and manifested himself in J. C. Petavius acknowledges the same (*De Trinit. lib. I. c. 13.*) as to *Paul of Samosata* and *Marcellus*. Dr. Pearson agrees with him, "That the last (*Vind. Ignat. Par. 2. c. 3.*) believ'd an existent *Word* in the *Hypostasis* of the Father, and which came forth thence as a single Operation to create the Universe. Dr. Bull (*Judic. Eccles. lyc. p. 67.*) recounting the Opinion of *Paul of Samosata*, attributes to him constantly, "that he believ'd an efficiacious *Word* descended from Heaven" on J. C. And by the *Word*, saith he, "Paul did not intend that *Hypostasis*, which we call the *Son of God*, but a *Power*, and a Divine Virtue, which form'd him in the Virgin, and which was closely united to him to work the Miracles he did. Neither can it be denied that this was the Opinion of *Beryllus*. Those Expressions of *Eusebius*, that have given so much trouble to the Learned, are not difficult to be understood, provided you supply them with some Particle, and add a word or two, as you must sometimes in all other Authors. In my opinion *Eusebius* intends nothing else (*Lib. 6. c. 33.*) but that this Bishop maintain'd that the Man J. C. did not pre-exist in another *Essence*, or another Nature, that was proper to him, before he liv'd among Men: And consequently that the Deity which dwelt since he liv'd among Men, was not an *Hypostasis* of his own, but the Divinity and Virtue of the Father. This is a right Notion; the *Word* is nothing else but a Divine Power distinct from the *Son*, and a Heavenly *Wisdom* descended on J. C. *Beryllus*, *Paul*, and *Marcellus* had it perhaps from *Ignatius*, who calls J. C. (*Epist. ad Magnes.*) *The Eternal Word that came not forth out of silence*; i. e. that he was not a *Word brought forth* and begotten with its proper *Hypostasis*, but the *Operation* and the *essential Virtue* of God manifesting

himself outwardly. For I frankly agree, that this Passage of *Ignatius*, which hath given so much trouble to the Abettors of his Epistles, is not intended against *Valentine*; but I say, it attacks those *Platonick Doctors*, who asserted a *Generation* of the *Word* a little before the Beginning of the World, and who believ'd that it was *brought forth*, and consequently proceeded out of *Silence*. This was the Opinion of *Tertullian*, and many of the Fathers who preceded him, that the *Word that was brought forth*, which they believ'd to be the only that was *begotten*, and the only one that might be call'd the *Son*, did come forth in time of another *mute Word*, which they call'd *Reason* or *Wisdom* eternal.

*Tertullian* teacheth us positively (*adv. Prax.*) "that before the *Word that was brought forth*, came out of the *Wisdom*, or the *Divine Reason*, God had it in himself, in his Thought, as a silent *Word*; habebat intra semetipsum tacitè cogitando. You cannot express more clearly, that the *Word brought forth* came out of *Silence*. This Opinion, no doubt, began to glide in at the time of *Ignatius*, who laughs at it, and refutes it, rejecting this *Word brought forth*, and proceeding out of *Silence*, which receiv'd its *Hypostasis* a little before the *Creation*, as being a *Word* merely *Platonick*; and he admits no other *Word* to be real, but that *essential Virtue*, which was eternally in God, which is God himself, which created the World, and was as it were incorporated in J. C. And this *Ignatius's* way of speaking, that J. C. is the *eternal Word*, is grounded on the Words of St. John, that the *Word was made Flesh*; that is to say, that the same *Virtue* which created the World is become the proper *Virtue* of J. C. in such a manner, that you may say rightly, that J. C. made the Ages by his *Power*, and consequently by himself; for that which is done by my *Power*, is done by my self. When therefore the Apostles say, that all things were made by J. C. or by the *Son*, their meaning

meaning is no other, but that they were made by the immense Power of the Father, which was in J.C. he becoming that *Power*, that *Spirit*, that *Wisdom* of the Father, because all the Miracles effected by that Power, are said to be done by J. C. in whom it resided. In this sense *Simeon Magus* call'd himself, *the great Power of God*, and boasted that he had made the Ages; not that he believ'd himself, as the Antients would have it, to be a Divine *Hypostasis*, sometimes the *Father*, sometimes the *Son*, and sometimes the *Holy Ghost*: He was not so extravagant, but only aping J.C. design'd to say, that the Divine *Power*, which actuated him, was the *Power of the Father*, the *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, the same *Power* that created the World. J. C. is in the same sense call'd the *Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24.

We may enforce the Explication we have given of *Ignatius* his Words, by the manner how *Irenaeus* disputes against the *Valentinians* (Lib. 2. c. 47. &cseq.) "It is true, saith he, that in regard to Man, he is sometimes silent, sometimes speaks; sometimes he takes his rest, and sometimes acts: But it is

" not so with God, who being all Understanding, all Reason, all Spirit, is " not liable to such like Changes. Meaning, that God is always a *Reason*, an *internal Word*, but never a *Word brought forth*, as he explains himself afterwards, saying, " That God being all *Reason*, " thinking in him is speaking, and speaking " in nothing else but thinking: For his " Thought is his Speech, and his Speech " is his Understanding; and this Understanding, which comprehends all things, " is the Father himself. Further, to make us the better comprehend, that he speaks thus against the *Word brought forth*, or begotten, he accosts the *Valentinians* with this smart Raillery. The *Valentinians*, saith he, speak of the *bringing forth* and *Generation* of the *Son*, as if they had assisted the *Father* at his Birth. I shall leave you to consider, whether this Raillery spares our Scholasticks. He that would be at the pains about it, needs only make a Parallel of their System concerning the *Generation* of the *Son*, with that of the *Valentinians*, and he might soon see whether those Hereticks only were ridiculous herein.

## C H A P. XII.

*Plato speaks but enigmatically. His Word is not that of St. John. Several Systems of the Platonists explain'd.*

I could produce many more *Platonists*, but to be brief, I come now to *Plato* himself. See then what *Clement of Alexandria* saith of him (Strom. lib. 5. p. 592. of the *Paris Edition*) " When Plato saith, that it is difficult to find the Father of the Universe, he shews by this, not only that the World was generated, but also that it was generated as his Son. *Plato* himself gives us the Substance of his System in his 2d Letter to *Dionysius*, with this caution, that it is alto-

gether *enigmatical*. " All things, says he, " are round about the *King* of the Universe, the things of the second Order are " about the *Second*, and the things of the third Order are about the *Third*. Which is thus interpreted by *Marsilius Ficinus*. " The Ideas are about the *Good*, " the *Angelic Spirits* about the *Reason*, " and the *Forms* about the *Soul of the World*. He adds, that *Plato* calls them " three *Principles*, not because they are equally such, but inasmuch as they are " subor-

" subordinate the one to the other.  
 " The Good is such of himself; the  
 " Reason inasmuch as it is the nearest to  
 " God, and the Soul inasmuch as it is  
 " produced by the first and second God.  
 Now this Order, whatever it be, hath  
 no relation at all to an invisible Trinity,  
 but is manifestly refer'd to the World  
 and Creation, seeing the Second and the  
 Third God are nothing else but the Under-  
 standing, and the efficacious Will of  
 the supreme God; the one being filled  
 with the Ideas of all Beings, and the  
 other producing their different Forms.  
 Thus you have the Riddle unfolded. I  
 am not ignorant that Clemens Alexandr.  
 pretends in the same Book I have quoted,  
 that these Words of Plato mean  
 nothing else but the Christian Platonic  
 Trinity (if I may express myself thus)  
 but without any ground, as is evident  
 by the Commentary of Picinus. Cle-  
 ment endeavours to shew in this whole  
 Book, that there is no Tenent in the  
 whole Christian Religion, but what is  
 found in Plato and the other Philoso-  
 phers. Now seeing the Doctrine about  
 the *άρσης* was the Darling of Plato, we  
 need not wonder if the Platonic Fathers  
 search'd for all the possible Resembla-  
 nces between the Second God of Plato,  
 and the only Son of God, on whose be-  
 half and to this purpose, they imagin'd  
 a Generation and Pre-existence before  
 Time was; having chang'd all the Gos-  
 pel matters of Fact concerning the mi-  
 raculous Birth of our Saviour, into vain  
 and empty Contemplations, which sup-  
 pos'd in him another distinct Nature,  
 from that which he received from the  
 Holy Ghost and the Virgin. To con-  
 clude, whoever insists, as it is usual, on  
 the seeming Resemblance found between  
 the Word of St. John, and that of the  
 Divine Plato, seems willing to deceive  
 himself; seeing the most able Criticks  
 have own'd already, that there is no  
 Resemblance at all between these two  
 Words.

*Desiderius Herauldus*, as he is quoted

by Mons. Le Clerc, (*Biblioth. Univ. Tom. VI. p. 24.*) remarks judiciously: " That  
 " the Christians of that Time strain'd  
 " to their Advantage, all the Actions,  
 " Words and Writings of the Pagans,  
 " which they often interpreted con-  
 " trary to the true Meaning of the  
 " latter. I shall now quote Cajanion,  
 who is not at all suspected in this Affair.  
 This Critick having related a Passage of  
 Cyril against Julian, where this Father  
 pretends that Plato, ascribing the Cre-  
 ation of the World to the Word, speaks  
 the same with St. John; that Critick  
 declares that himself is not at all of that  
 Opinion: " You have here the Word,  
 " saith he (*Exercit. in Baron. pag. 5.*)  
 " by the which Plato assures the visible  
 " World was made. He indeed seems  
 " to say what St. John did, which is  
 " what Cyril pretends to: but if we  
 " take a nearer view of this Affair, this  
 " Word, or this Reason, as Plato would  
 " have it, which the supreme God em-  
 " ployed in the Creation of the World,  
 " is visibly and wholly different from  
 " the Word Jesus Christ, whereof St.  
 " John speaks; which Word is unknown  
 " to those, to whom the Revelation is  
 " known. There are found many such  
 " like Expressions in the Fathers, where  
 " the Ambiguity of the Words may de-  
 " ceive those, who do not examine  
 " them with a requisite Attention.

See here in brief what may be gathered  
 from the *Platonists Writings* of the  
 Platonic Philosophers.

These Philosophers considering the  
 Trinity, always with respect to the Cre-  
 ation of the World, built three Systems  
 thereon. We shall name the first a The-  
 ologic System, which puts down the su-  
 preme Being for the first God, the in-  
 telligible and Ideal World for the second,  
 and the sensible World for the third:  
 The first is the Father, because he is  
 the Understanding generating the Ideas;  
 the other is the Son, the internal Word  
 or the Thought of the Father, because  
 he is immediately generated, and sub-  
 sists

sists always in the Ideas of the *Father*: the last is the *Spirit* and *Soul*, or the *Creature* proceeding from the other two, because it receives the *Form* from the *Idea*, but its Life and its Motion from the first Author of all things. I shall name the second System of the *Platonists* the *Allegoric System*, which considers a Trinity of Properties in the *second God* or the *Word*, in relation to the *Creation*; meaning by the *Divine Word* nothing else but the infinite *Goodness*, the admirable *Wisdom*, and the immense *Power*, which have form'd the Universe, as we have observed it above in a Passage of *Clemens*. Hence it appears on what account they called it the *Maker* and *Creator* of all things. Lastly, we will name the third the *Physical System*, which considers in relation to the World an *efficient Cause*, viz. a *Creator* and a *Father*, a *Matter* subsisting from all Eternity in this first Author, which proceeded from him, by the way of *Prolation* or *Emanation*, and a *Form* produced, resulting from the other two, both from the *Matter* and the *first Cause*. The one is the *internal Word*, the other the *Word brought forth*, and the third is the *animated World*. These three Systems (and perhaps many others, that may be found in the allegorizing Platonists pregnant with such like Methods) are the *Cause* of *Plato's* Doctrine being so confus'd, and difficult to be penetrated. Therefore Mr. le Cleve was in the right, when he says (*Biblioth. univ. Tom. Xe p. 396.*)

" That there is a great deal of Confusion in the *Platonists* System, that " they have even contradicted them-  
" selves, not having a clear and distinct  
" Idea of what they would say. We  
may affirm the same of the ancient Fa-  
thers who follow'd this Philosophy, in  
relation to the *Word*. But he did not  
observe that the Confusion remarkable  
therein, proceeds not only from the Di-  
versity of their Systems, but also for  
want of a good distinction between the  
*subtil Platonism* (for so I shall call it)

which treated allegorically of the *Goodness*, *Wisdom* and *Power* of God, under a Figure of *three Gods* who created the World; and the *gross Platonism*, which perceiving not the subtil part of this Allegory, and following the Letter, made three Hypostases of these three *Powers*. The first Method being allegoric and arbitrary, might (without contradicting it self) change the Name, Order and Number, &c. of the Figures it made use of, to express always the same thing. This was an ingenious Invention, that varied its Representations and Resemblances, tho' it continu'd the same at the bottom. But the second Method, fix'd on the Number Three, which were always reckoned in the same Order, and had almost always the same Names given them, could not be liable to the same Confusion, especially among Christians, who applied it constantly to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Besides, they could explain themselves clearly in this last Method, and speak of it distinctly; whereas the other, in its very rise, was a politick Method prudentially invented, and which was understand either ill or not at all, because it kept secret and allegorical.

Furthermore, the same distinction of *gross* and *subtil Platonism*, ought to take place in reference to the other two Systems, viz. in relation to the *Creator*, *Matter* and *Form*; and with respect to the *Father*, the *intelligible World*, and the *sensible World*. If you distinguish not well between the *Allegory* and the *Letter*, nothing will prove more intricate or unintelligible. Lastly, the principal Cause of this Confusion is, these two Methods being so often intermix'd; for if you mind it, the Fathers somerime philosophizing according to the *spurious Platonism*, insist rigidly on the sense of the *three Hypostases*: and sometimes treading in the Footsteps of the true and ancient Platonism, do only allegorize, and by their *Emanations* seem rather to mean the *Powers* of the supreme

preme Being, than *Spirits* subsisting. Sometimes nothing will serve their turn, but *Subsistences*, *Substances*, a true *Generation*, and a real *Procession*: At other times 'tis a quite different thing, they mean only the Powers and different *Oeconomies* of God, manifesting himself in the Creation of the World; to which they seem to give improperly the Name of a generated Son and *Wisdom* brought

forth; which doubtless is the Cause why so much Sabellianism overpreads their Writings. We need not wonder henceforth, if their *Trinity* is sometimes so inconsistent with the *Unity* of God, this proceeds from their gross *Platonism*: Whereas in other Places, their Three Principles suffer the *Unity* to remain entire, which proceeds from their refin'd *Platonism*.

## C H A P. XIII.

*The Christians have contriv'd a twofold Word, grounded upon the two Words of Plato. They meant only by Generation the Prolation of the second Word, which happened a little before the Creation of the World.*

**S**OCRATES reduc'd Philosophy to Morality; his Disciple *Plato* advanced it further, even to *Theology*, by making three *Persons*, or three Divine Hypostases of the three Divine Properties, by whose concurrence the World was created, or rather by conceiving a Creator infinitely *Good*, with an *Understanding*, drawing the Plan of the World, and an Energy that performs it. These Theologic Philosophers, allegorizing after their wonted manner, changed the intelligible World into the Word, and the sensible World into a Son. The one is the *λόγος ἐνδιδόντος*, the other the *λόγος προπονεύματος*. The Fathers in like manner distinguish'd the two *Words*, whereof the one is *internal*, the other *brought forth*; and consider'd only the second as a *Son*, because properly speaking, they called *Generation* only that which was perform'd at the beginning of the World. They say, "When God willed to create the World, he brought forth or generated the Word. May you not easily perceive, that such Modes of Speech owe their rise to the *Mystic Philosophers*"

*sophy*, which consider'd the whole World as the Son of God, and as a *Son* generated by his *Word* or *Command*? Yes, these Turns of Expression owe their birth to some Poetical ones of the Heathens, like those of *Orpheus* related by *Justin* (*in Protrep. ad Gentil.*) "I swear, faith the Poet, by that Voice which the Heav'nly Father uttered, when he formed the whole Creation. Then it was, according to *Justin*, that God generated his *Word*, because he brought it forth in order to create the World."

All this is well meant, and grounded upon the Words of *Moses*. The only difference I remark in the System about these two *Words* is; seeing Allegory is arbitrary, some have fix'd it on the *sensible World*, which they made to be the *Son of God*, as many of the Philosophers we quoted have done; because they consider'd it as the *Production* of the *Divine Speech or Power*: but others fixed their Allegory upon the *intelligible or Ideal World*, even on the *Speech* itself as thrust forth, which they consider'd as a *Production* of the *Divine Understanding*.

derstanding. This last System was followed by the Christians, when they personalized either the *Word brought forth*, as the first Fathers and the *Arians*, or the *Internal and Mental Word*, as the Fathers of the Council of Nice and the *Athanasians* did.

*Bull* being forc'd to own this Truth, pretends to clear the difficulty, by distinguishing a twofold Generation of the *Word*, the one *Eternal* and the other *Temporal*; and maintaining that the Fathers consider'd the first as *Real*, the second as *Metaphorical*; but just the contrary hereof is true. *Theophilus of Antioch* distinguisheth carefully the *λόγος ἐνδιάτερος*, which is the *Thought of God*, from the *λόγος ἐπορθεύως*, which is the *Word generated*. *Athenagoras* and *Tatian* tell us of a Son, who was in God, in *Idea* and potentially before he actually exist'd as a Person. *Tertullian* faith: "There was a time when the Son was not a Son, and that the Father was not always a Father; that the Word which he distinguisheth from Reason, was not from the beginning. *Novatian* declares expressly (*chap. 31.*) that the *Procession* of the Son which was done when the Father willed it; that is to say, when he resolv'd to create the World: "That this *Prolation*, say I, made the Son a second Person. *Origen* and *Clement* make a difference between the *Word which was God*, and the *Word which was made Flesh*, meaning that the former was the *internal Word*, which is the *Divine Understanding* and God himself; and by the latter the *Word brought forth*, which is only an *Emanation* from the former: *Prudentius* calls *J. C. Verbigena*, begotten of the *Word*; where you may see manifestly the two *Words*, the one *generating*, and the other *generated*; the one being the *essential Wisdom of God*, the other is its *Production*: And the first *Word* is so far from being the *Son*, that *Prudentius* consider's it as the *Father*. Lastly, not to be tedious, *Marius Victorinus* makes so

great a difference between the *Word speaking*, and the *Word silent*, that he calls the former the *Son* and the latter the *Father*.

All these Fathers generally tell us, that before the *Word* was *generated*, it was in the *Heart of God*, in the *Womb of his Understanding*, in his *Bowels*, whence it came forth as it were from its *Seed and Bud*. Either all these Terms mean nothing, or they denote that the *Son* did not then exist, otherwise than in the *Design and Intent of the Father*; that he came forth thence, when by the virtue of the *Divinae Prolation*, he did receive a real Existence. Now it is not the first Existence but the second, which the Fathers constantly and properly call the *Generation of the Son*, or in other words the *perfect Generation*, i. e. the real and actual Generation. Mons. *Du Pin* (*Bibl. Tom. I.* at the *Word Theophilus*) faith, "That the Fathers affirm the *Lagis* to be *Eternal*, and that it was in God from all Eternity, as his *Counsel*, his *Wisdom*, and his *Word*. But they say the same *Word* which was in God, did after some manner come out of God, when God resolv'd to create the World, because he then began to make use of that *Word* in order to act outwardly: This is what they term to be the *Procession*, *Prolation*, and even the *Generation* of the *Word*. This hinders not indeed the *Word's* having been from all Eternity, nor its *eternal Generation* of the *Father*, as we conceive the manner thereof, but this is not what they call *Generation*. The same Author owns in his Notes upon the Article of *Tertullian*, that this *Father* means not *Generation* to be the *eternal Procession* of the *Son*, but only a certain *Prolation* or outward *Emission*, conceiv'd by him to have been at the *Creation of the World*, because God both created, and governs it by the *Word*. He faith further, we need not wonder, that he should tell us in his Book against *Hermogenes*, that there was a time when,

the

the *Father* was not *Father*, and that the *Son* began to be *Son*, because he believ'd that the *Son* had neither that Quality nor Name, but only when the *Word* was created.

Mons. *Jurieu* expresseth himself as fully in his sixth Pastoral Letter of the third Year, attributing this Sentiment to all the *Antenicene Fathers*, viz. that the *Word* had not its perfect Birth before the World's beginning; i.e. according to Mr. *Jurieu*, the *Word* is not eternal as it is a *Son*, but only was hid in the *Bosom of his Word* as *Wisdom*; and that he was as it were produc'd, and became a distinct Person from that of the *Father*, a little before the Creation. You must be wilfully blind, if you perceive not from what source this *Theology of the Word* doth spring. As it is certain that the Heathens ever philosophiz'd of their Gods, but relatively to the Origin of this Universe, and have always join'd *Theogony* with their *Cosmogony*: So likewise these *Platonizing* Christians follow'd the Steps of this Pagan Philosophy; their Creation of the World always accompanying the *Prolation of the Word*, or the *Generation of the Son*. This is noted by the same Mons. *Jurieu* in the aforesaid Passage, when he speaks of *Athenagoras* and *Tertullian*. "They believed, saith he, that the *Wisdom*, which was not the *Son of God* at first, but only in a *Bud* or *Seed*, having spread it self over the *Chaos*, did not only generate the *Creatures*, but did also as it were by the same Effusion, give a perfect existence to the *Word*, or to the *second Person* of the *Deity*. This indeed may be said to philosophize like Heathens. May it not be said, that the *Wisdom* and the *Chaos* were the *Father* and *Mother*, whose Children are the *Word* and the *Creatures*? But this is not all, they bring them in

by Couples like the *Hems* of *Valentine*; so true it is that the Christians would not divide, what the Philosophers and Poets had united so closely, viz. *Theogony* and *Cosmogony*.

I return to Dr. *Bull*, praying him to consider whether a real Generation, and properly so called, can be expressed better than by saying that it is *perfect*, that it is in *AB*, that it gave a *perfect Existence to the Word*, that it made the *Word a Person distinct from the Father*; and in short, that it render'd the *Father* to be properly a *Father*, and the *Son* properly a *Son*. This the Fathers say of the *second Generation*, which they consider as the *only Generation and Birth of the Son*. On the contrary, can an *improper and Metaphoric Generation* be expressed better, than by saying, that the *Son existed only in Idea potentially*, in a *Bud*, in its *Seed*, in the *Heart*, in the *Womb* and the *Bowels of God*? For thus the Fathers talk of the *first Generation*, or to express it better, of the *first Existence of the Son of God*, which they scarce reckon to be a Generation. For can you, for example-sake, call the *Metaphoric Existence* of *Levi* in the *Loins of his Father*, when he was decimated in *Abraham*, a *Generation*? But the Fathers think thus of the *first Existence*, whilst they say that the *Son existed then only in a Bud or Seed*, and not, as Mons. *Jurieu* pretends (*Tabl. du Socin. Let. 6. Art. 3.*) that he was contain'd in the *Bosom of the Father*, as a Child is in its Mother's *Womb*; as if the *Word* had need to form it self by degrees in the *Bowels of the Father*, and wait its time, to-wit, that of the *Creation of the World*, which should likewise happen to be that of its *Delivery*. If Mr. *Jurieu* had understood the *Platonic Philosophy*, he had taken care to avoid such a ridiculous Thought.

## C H A P. XIV.

## The immediate Generation of the Word.

THE ancient Doctors followed *Plato*, and their meaning was, that the Divine Understanding is the Principle and *Bud*, where the Son existed from Eternity *as to his Essence*: all Essences being eternal in this respect, according to the *Platonists*, because they are the *Emanations* of the Substance of God, but particularly all *generated Spirits*; hence *Homousianism* takes its rise. The Son came forth out of this first source of all Essences, being the chiefest of them in God's Design. He came forth in Time *as to his Person*, to be the first Minister of the Father in the Creation of this Universe: This distinguisheth him from all the Creatures, the Birth of which is less noble, as not being *immediate*. Hereupon, if you had asked them the reason, why the *Word* alone, amongst all the *generated Spirits*, should be called the *Son*, or the only *Son*, they could not have alledged any other than the Privilege of being *generated immediately* (*αὐτῶν*) of the Father; whereas the other Spirits were so, by the means of a second God, and Minister. The Author of the *Apostolic Confessions* speaks thus (Lib. 8. cap. 12.) "The Father, " who alone is above all Generation and Beginning, having created all things " by his only Son, has immediately ge- " nerated (without any Intermedium) " that his only Son by his Will, by his " Power and Goodness. He generated " him before all the Æons, making use " of him afterwards to create even the " Æons, the Cherubims and Seraphims, &c. According to him the Angels were form'd by the Son, but the Son was generated only by the Will and the im-

mediate Power of God, which is his Prorogative.

You need not doubt that *Eusebius* intended the same thing, when he calls J. C. (*de Laud. Constan.* cap. 1.) the most ancient of all the Æons, *πρωτοτάτης*. Other Fathers thought the same, whenever they made use of these Words of St. John, *In the beginning was the Word*; for they did not mean that by the Beginning Eternity ought to be understood, which this Word cannot denote; as *Maldonat* confesseth ingenuously (*in Joan. i. 1.*) they only meant, that the Word was not created in the beginning of all things (when God created the Heavens and the Earth) after the manner of other Creatures, or that of the other *generated Spirits*, because it had a Being then already, the Father having begotten it before by an immediate Generation. For this Reason the Author of the *Recognitions* (lib. 3. cap. 11.) denies formally, that the Holy Spirit may be called Son, " because " there is, faith he, but one ungener- " ated, and but one generated; it can- " not be said that the Holy Spirit is a " Son, having been made by another, " who was likewise made. *Eusebius* de- livers this Doctrine as a

\* *Tradition of the Church* \* *Such is the*  
(\* *De Ecclesi. Theol.* lib. Argument of  
3. cap. 6.) " *The Spi-* that Chapter.  
" *rit, the Paraclet, saith*  
" he, is neither God nor Son, because  
" he took not his Origin from the Fa-  
ther, after the same manner as the  
" Son did, being of the Number of  
" those things that were made by the  
" Son, for whom all things were made;  
" All

" All things, saith the Evangelist, consequently then the Holy Spirit also. *Origen's Doctrine* is the source of all this, who maintains in his 1 Tom. upon St. John, that the Holy Spirit is a Creature of the Son, relying with *Eusebius* upon this Expression, that all things, not excepting the Holy Spirit, were made by the Son.

This Theology of the Ancients touching the *immediate Generation of the Word*, at the time of the World's Creation, was follow'd by many other Doctors, even after the Council of Nice. *Marius Victorinus* is of this Number, who would have it in his first Book, that the *Generation of the Word* is only an *Effusion and Manifestation* of that Power which created the World, and which was hid in God before. You may join *Zeno* of Verona with him (*de aeterna Filii Generatione, Serm. 3.*) who moreover explains this Generation, by referring it to the Creation of the World. " For, as he saith, it was then that the Word, which was as it were buried in the Abyss of the Divine Understanding (in *profundo sacra Mensis, Serm. 1.*) was thrust forth and begotten. Would *Valentinus* have expressed himself otherwise about his *Word*, which came forth out of the Understanding, than this Man doth of his, come out of the Deep and Silence? But we ought not to forget *Rupert*, who unfolds admirably this Philosophic *Cabala*, saying, " That the Father *already* begot the Word, which contain'd potentially all things; when he created the Heavens and the Earth. Yes, he goes on, the Father thrust forth this good Word out of his Heart, and before the Morning-Star begot him out of his Bosom, *viz.* out of the Bottom of his Substance, when he said, *Let there be Light*. Nothing can be more like to *Origen's* Expression, " That the Generation of the light, is the *Generation of the Son*. Mr. *Huet* excuseth *Origen*, alledging that he spoke allegorically: we do not doubt

it, all this Theology is Allegorick. The *Word or Command* which God utter'd to the *Creature*, is the *Son of God*, but improperly so, and in the same sense, that my *Thought* or my *Speech* are the Sons of my Understanding; which both conceives and brings them forth: This is too evident, and for this cause Dr. *Bull* had reason to retrench out of his Quotation (*Defen. Fidei Nic. p. 395.*) these last Words of *Rupert's* Passage; " That the Father begat the Son, when he said, *Let there be Light*.

But *Lagartius* goes beyond all these Doctors I quoted; for he allows not to the *Word* so much as the Advantage of an *immediate Generation*, above the other generated *Spirits*: He finds no difference between them, but only in the different manner of their *Prolation*, and in the different Design God had in the begetting of them. " The Holy Scriptures teach us, saith he (*Lib. 4. c. 8.*) that the Son of God is the *Word of God*, even as also the other Angels are the *Spirits of God*. For the *Word* is a *Spirit*, which was brought forth with a significative Voice: But because the *Spirit* (Breath) and *Speech*, are thrust forth by different Organs, the *Spirit* proceeding out of the Nouris, and the *Speech* out of the Mouth, consequently there is a great difference between this *Son of God* and the other Angels (*ceteros Angelos*) these being come forth out of God as *simple and mate Spirits*, because they were not created to preach the *Doctrine of God*, but only for the executing of his Orders. But the Son, notwithstanding he is a *Spirit*, yet he came forth of the Mouth of God with a Sound and a Voice, like unto *Speech*, because God was to make use of his Voice to instruct the People, &c. You see manifestly, how he confounds the Angel, who is called the *Word*, with the other Angels; that he makes them all to proceed out of God equally by an *immediate Prolation*; and

that the only difference he makes here consists in this, that the common Angels proceeded out of the *Nostrils* of God as mute Spirits, design'd only to execute his Orders by Deeds ; whereas this chief Angel whom he calls the *Son*, doth proceed out of the Mouth of God, as a vocal and sounding Speech, design'd to deliver his Oracles, and to reveal his Will.

Lastly, *Origen*, or some body else under his Name, goes beyond even *Lactantius* himself, in that he confounds the *Generation* of the *Word* with that of common Creatures (*Himil. 2. in diversis*) For tho on the one hand he seems to say, " That the Word was born before all things, and that all things were made by him ; yet he advanceth at the same time, that these Words, *all things* were made by him, signify only, that at his being born of the Father, all things were likewise born together with him, the *Generation* of the *Word-God* being the same with the *Creation* of all things. And tho he saith, " That the Son is of a different Substance from the Creature, that he hath the same Nature with the Father, and that he had a beginning before Time was : He seems to destroy all this, by adding, " That the Substance of the Father is the Cause of the Son's Substance, and that Jesus Christ intended so much when he said, that his Father was greater than he ; which asserts evidently, that the Substance of the Father is greater than that of the Son : As also when he goes on, " To exist before Time, is to exist not in Time, but with Time. His Conclusion will tell us his Meaning : " We ought then, faith he, to believe three things, the Father bringing forth the Son begotten, and the things that were made by the Word ; the Father speaks, the Word is begotten, and all things are made. Conformably to what he was saying, *viz.* that the Father bringeth forth the Word, that is to say, beget-

ting his Wisdom, all things were then made. It is not difficult to sound the Depth of this Philosophy. The *Word* is of the same Substance with the Father, because it is the proper Power of the Father : but it is less than the Father, because it is only a Breath, an Emanation, and a Ray. The *Word* is before all things, because it was necessary, that God should command before the Creature obeyed. But all things are born together with it, because God created the World, by bringing forth and begetting the *Word*. We should open our Eyes, and see the Cabala of the Creation of the World through all these mysterious Generations. So, as *Clement of Alexandria* expounds it in brief (*Strom. lib. 5.*) " The *Word*, saith he, " coming out of God did cause the Creation ; that is, to speak plainly, God created the World by one single Word ; and seeing this great Maker made no use of any other Instrument, hence it came to pass, no doubt, that this *Word* of his was called his Minister.

But let us return to *immediate Generation*. As the Philosophers understood by Wisdom, *Sophia*, nothing else but the Universal Idea of the World, which they called the *first-born Son of God*, because it is the Plan of this sensible World : So the Fathers being enur'd to this way of philosophizing, conceiv'd also the Idea of the Messiah, to be the first Idea in the Spiritual World, and an Universal One, and to be the Source and Seed of all the other Ideas. In this sense *Tertullian* against *Hermogenes*, makes *Wisdom* to be more ancient than the *Word*, meaning, that this *Wisdom* did thrust the *Word* it self out of the Heart of God, and together all the various Forms of existing things. Which is a mere Allegory ; the meaning of which is, that the *Word* brought forth, and all other things were made according to the *Plan* and *Idea* of the internal *Word*, which is the immediate Production of the Divine Understanding. Hence

Hence it comes, that *Justin* in his second *Apology*, distinguisheth the Universal Reason ( $\tau\pi\alpha\delta\tau\alpha\lambda\gamma\sigma$ , or  $\tau\pi\alpha\delta\tau\alpha\lambda\gamma\sigma$ ) or the Primitive Seed, which is nothing else but the Wisdom of God, from Reason which is in every Man, and which is only a Portion and Emanation of the Divine Word ( $\sigma\alpha\kappa\mu\alpha\lambda\gamma\sigma$   $\tau\pi\alpha\delta\tau\alpha\lambda\gamma\sigma$ ).

The Philosophers consider'd these Seeds ( $\lambda\gamma\sigma$   $\sigma\alpha\kappa\mu\alpha\lambda\gamma\sigma$ ). 1. In God, and then they differ not from *Platonic Ideas*, which are not only the Forms of Creatures trac'd in the Divine Understanding, but also are the Causes and the Origin of all Productions. *Marcus Antoninus* made use of this Word in that sense, lib. 4. 5. 10. 2. They consider'd these Seeds in things created, designing to denote by them their Essences and Forms, but especially that of Man, who is as it were a Portion of the Wisdom of God. This last is the sense of *Justin*. But they distinguish'd among these Primitive Seeds, the Idea of the Messiah, as an immediate one, and the first in the Divine Understanding, for the sake of which God trac'd and form'd all the rest. Hence arose that common Opinion, that God created the World for the Messiah. This Opinion, whether true or false, gave occasion to *Mahomet* to apply to himself this Prerogative of the Messiah, that God would not have created the Heaven and the Earth, had it not been for the love he bare him (*apud Barthol. Edessem. in confit. Agaren.*)

Furthermore, if any will demand how it happened, that so many of the Disciples of *Plato*, both Christians and Pagans, did so grossly follow the Letter of his three Principles, made three *Hypotheses* of them, and changed his Cosmogony into a mere Theology: Vanwerven, as Mons. Le Clerc doth concerning Idolatry (on *Exod. 20. 4.*) "It proceeded, saith he, from the Craft of Priests, who, in order to make Religion more August, talk'd but very obscurely of

" its Mysteries; whatever was clear  
" was not convenient for them, but e-  
" very thing must be concealed under  
" Symbols and Riddles: and seeing that  
" Symbolical Religion was purely arbit-  
" rary, it came to pass that the true  
" sense of those Symbols was effaced  
" out of the Minds of Men, nothing  
" remaining for the Vulgar, except  
" what made an Impression upon their  
" senses: So that they believed at last,  
" that the Deity it self dwelt under  
" those Figures. At first they design'd  
" to represent under the Symbolical Fi-  
" gure of an Ox, only a King devoted  
" to Husbandry; but at last they came  
" to believe, that the Soul it self of  
" that King deified did inhabit that  
" Ox."

No doubt but the Philosophers them-selves were a part of the People. The greater of them having found the Truth, had some Reasons to cover it under Fictions, thereby to disguise it to others. *Plato* had many as we have seen already. He having found the Father of the World, to be the most good, wise and powerful God, and having found it dangerous to speak of him according to Truth, he made three *Hypo-  
theses*, and three Gods of the three Attributes, which he conceived were in the Creator, and spake of them Majestically, under the Names of *God*, *Reason*, and the *Soualistic World*, or under some other Fictions that vary the Terms, yet without altering the secret Doctrine contained in those Symbols. This Symbolic Theology being arbitrary, or rather a mere Fiction, the Sense raised under that Shell, dwindled away by little and little: The Letter remaining alone, they philosophized only on the indeterminate System of three *Hypotheses*, viz. of a *First*, *Second* and *Third* God. The Christians especially were not wanting to make a noise about this Mystery, to render their Religion the more pompous. But after all, it was the gross *Plato-  
nism*,

*nism*, that turned the Christian Doctrines into a mere Paganism. Thus the best things degenerate, but it was not so from the beginning.

## C H A P. XV.

*The Sentiment of the Moralists among the Jews, concerning the Wisdom or the Word. St. John hath imitated them.*

I know it is pretended, that the Jews were not ignorant of the Mystery of the *Platonic* *Abys*; but in truth, there is too much Weakness, in what is alledged from the 8th of *Proverbs*, and some other Places in their moral Books. I am amazed to think, that any body should nec see this Chapter to be figurative, and that *Solomon* speaks there of Wisdom in general, such as it is in God, or as he hath communicated it to Man: but especially of that which shines forth, and is to be admired in the Creation of the World, as some of the Orthodox understand it in St. Jeron's time (*Hieron. in cap. 2. Ephes.*) Dr. Patrick now Bishop of Ely doth freely own in his Paraphrase on this Chapter, that *Solomon* speaks here of nothing else but the wise Laws which God had given to the *Israelites*: "Arg. ver. 21, 22, &c.

— This is expressed in such magnificent Languages, that tho' *Solomon* I suppose thought of nothing but the wise Directions God had given them in his Word, revealed to them by his Servant *Moses* and the Prophets; yet the antient Christians thought his Words might be better applied to the Wisdom revealed unto us in the Gospel by the Son of God himself, the Eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father.

Could he have expressed himself more clearly, to give us to understand, that when the *Platonic* Fathers applied these lofty Expressions of *Solomon* to their *Eternal Word*, they did not, or

could not do it, but by the way of an *Accommodation* or *Allusion*? The same Bishop, having related the Opinion of some Fathers a little lower, who apply the same Expressions of *Solomon* to the Man Jesus Christ, afterwards goes on thus, pag. 63. "But this (saith he) not being the sense of the Words which *Solomon* first intended, I shall not build my Paraphrase upon it, but take *Wisdom* here, as it signifies in other Places of this Book, and hath been hitherto described, whom *Solomon* now celebrates for her most venerable Antiquity, and introduces like a most beautiful Person, no less than a Queen, or rather some Divine Being (infinitely to be preferred before that base Scumpter, spoken of in the foregoing Chapter.)

Indeed *Solomon* hath made her speak, by introducing her as a Person, and exhorts young People to give ear to her: She speaks of herself, that God created her, or that she comes to us from God; that she was before the World was made, because God, who is the source of her and communicates her to Men, did make use of her in framing this Universe; Also that Kings reign by her, because Prudence and good Counsels are the Soul of a good Government. Notwithstanding this clear and natural sense, Prejudice hath abused these Words to apply them to Jesus Christ: but there are many other that cannot at all agree to him.

'Tis true, that the Platonick Fathers are alledg'd here, who understood this Chapter literally of a *Personal Wisdom*. I own it, but the same Fathers have also, and that with no less Pomp, quoted that Passage of the 45th Psalm, *My Heart is inditing a good Matter, (Word) to prove the Eternal Generation of J.C.* We justly laugh now adays at so ridiculous an Interpretation, as well as of that, Psal. 110. *From the Womb of the Morning thou hast the Dew of thy Youth:* Which the antient Interpreters did endeavour to make subservient to the same purpose. Let us then, I pray, mistrust them as to this Text in the *Proverbs*, they having so grossly deceiv'd us in those two of the *Psalms*, which they made use of, for the same ends, as frequently and with as much Confidence.

But afer all, tho' their Testimonies should be produc'd in shoals, we can produce better Interpreters of *Prov. 8.* I mean; the Books of the Old Testament it self, the *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*, which tho' they are Apocryphal, yet are of greater Authority than the Writings of the Fathers, who were the Disciples of *Plato*; the Authors of these two having probably known better the Mind of *Solomon*, and the Sentiments of the *Jews*. The Author of the *Wisdom* having made use of the same *Proposita* with him in the *Proverbs*, calls *Wisdom, The Breath (Spirit) of the Power of God, a pure Stream flowing from the Glory of the Almighty, the Brightnes of the everlasting Light, the unspotted Mirrour of the Power of God, the Image of his Goodness, and that she sits on the Throne of God.* He goes on like the Author of the *Proverbs*, that when God created the World, *Wisdom was with him, knew his Works, was present then, knoweth and understandeth all things.* But to let you see that he speaks only of a *Quality or Virtue*, he adds, *That he loved her, sought her out from his Youth, desired to have her for a Spouse, was a Lover of her Beauty: He desires of God in his ardent Prayers, to*

*give her to him, to send her out of the Heavens to assist him, to teach him, that his Works might be acceptable: For, saith he, we hardly guess aright at things that are upon the Earth; but the things that are in Heaven who can search out; unless God gives Wisdom, and send his Holy Spirit from above? (See Chap. 7, 8, & 9.)* The same Author, speaking further of this Divine Perfection, saith, *That God made all things by his Word, form'd Man by his Wisdom, Chap. 9. 1, 2.* taking the *Word* and *Wisdom* for one and the same thing, viz. for that Power which created the World, and whereof *Wisdom* is but an *Emulation*. Can you imagine now this Author meant, that God did create the World by his *Son*, the second Person of the Trinity? Can such a Thought enter into a rational Creature?

Let us come now to the Author of the *Ecclesiasticus*, who expresseth better the Sense we ought to give to the *Words of Solomon*. He introduceth *Wisdom* speaking thus of her self: *I came out of the Mouth of the most High; he created me from the beginning, before the World.* Hitherto he seems to speak of a Person, but explains himself clearly, Ch. 24. Ver. 23. where he declares that he meant by this nothing else but the *Law of Moses*, which the *Jews* name *Wisdom* by way of Excellency. For having spoken of *Wisdom* under other Figures than that of a Person; I mean, under the Figure of a *Palm-tree*, an *Olive-tree*, a *Vine*, &c. he sums up what he had said in these words: *All these things are the Book of the Covenant of the most High, even the Law which Moses gave.* Can the Law given by *Moses* be call'd more expressly, not only an *Olive-tree*, or a *Vine*, but also the *Word* which came out of the *Mouth of the most High*, and *Wisdom* which *God created before the World?* Which are Expressions visibly figurative, the which under the Fiction of a Person, or the Figure of a *Vine*, represent the *Wisdom* of God to us, sometimes as revealing it self in the Creation of the

World, and again as replenishing Men with the Fruits of its Knowledg in the Dispensation of the Law. This kind of Fictions was familiar to the Moralist Jews, and to all the Oriental Philosophers. You must be purblind, if you discern not immediately the Genius of that People, accustom'd to a figurative and parabolick Stile.

St. John imitates the Moralist Jews ; and, according to the same Ideas, hath at one view represented to us the *Word* or *Wisdom* of God manifesting himself to Men, in two of the greatest of his Dispensations, viz. in the *Old*, and the *New Creation*. The Method is the same absolutely ; you need only put the *Gospel*, or the *Author of the Gospel*, instead of *Moses* and the *Law*. You may really see him join these two things together, viz. *The Wisdom of God residing in God himself, and presiding at the Creation of the World* ; and the same *Wisdom* descending upon J. C. (in whom it was as it were incarnated) and ordering the *New World*. For if, according to the *Hebrews*, the *Law* was the *Wisdom*, or the *Word*, or *Precept* by way of Excellency, much more doth this great Elogium belong to the *Gospel*, namely, to be the *Word*, the *Wisdom*, the *Truth*, the *Light*, and the *Life* by way of excellency. An Elogium consequently belonging to J. C. who brought the *Word* and the *Life*, and was the great Teacher of *Truth*. Whatever the Scripture saith of the First Creation, it saith the same in the same words of the New. All the *Encomiums* it gives to the *Law*, are applied more truly to the *Gospel* ; and lastly, it saith nothing of God the Father, which it doth not accommodate to J. C. his Son, "who is the *Vicarius* of the Father, as Tertullian calls "him, and who, saith he, makes us to "hear the Father in his *Words*, and "makes us see him in his *Actions*.

By this Rule you get the Key to all the Passages that seem to give the Son the same Names, Prerogatives, and the same Properties that God the Father

hath ; it is because J. C. being the *Vicarius* of God, both the *Words* and *Actions* of the Father are attributed to him, by the virtue and upon the account of the *Representation*, if I may thus express my self : For it is not, as I judg, by a mere *Accommodation*, but by a *Subordination*. Whatever is said of the Father in an exact and rigid Sense, may also be said of the Son, as of a *Minister* and *Ambassador* that represents God ; or to speak better, that executes in a visible manner what the Invisible Father had already promis'd should be done. Now lest any one should wrangle about this Title of *Ambassador*, I shall say more, namely, that there is more than a *Subordination*, because we see in J. C. not only the Character of an Envoy, but likewise an *Abode*, and an immediate *Prefence* of the Father's Person. He that receives a Prophet, receives him who sends the Prophet : therefore when J. C. came, vested with the Authority of the Father, to accomplish what God had promis'd should be perform'd by the hands of the *Messiah*, God himself came in his Person, and we have receiv'd him in the Person of Christ. Hence it comes to pass that J. C. is adorn'd with all the Characters of Glory and Power, which God attributes to himself, when he promiseth that signal Deliverance by the Prophets, which he design'd to perform one day for the good of his Church. For this reason J. C. is call'd *Emmanuel*, God with us, which is a Symbolical Name, by which the Scripture denotes the *extraordinary Prefence* of God in the *Messiah*, and teaches us, that it is not so much the Man, but that it is the Sovereign and Invisible God that acts. *I speak not of my self*, *I speak only the things my Father taught me* ; *I do nothing of my self*, but the Father that dwelleth in me doth the Works. These, in one word, are the constant Expressions of J. C. he refers all the Authority of his Doctrine, and all the Glory of his Miracles, to the Father dwelling in him. This the Jews call'd

call'd *Shekinah*, the *Habitation of God*. Here is more than the Abode of *God* in the midst of his People of old ; this is a more sensible and magnificent Presence ; and to say all, 'tis *God's dwelling in the Messiah*, for *God was with him*, saith the Apostle.

You have need only of this Reflection to foil the strongest Objection of the *Trinitarians*. They say, that the New Testament attributes constantly the same Properties and the same Perfections to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which the whole Scripture attributes to God the *Father*. Granted ; What follows then ? Necessarily one of these two things : Either you prove by it that there are three Gods, all which have the same Properties and equal Perfections ; which is contradictory, and disown'd even by those that make this Objection : or you must acknowledge with us, that the Perfections of the Son are nothing else but the Perfections of the Father dwelling in him, and communicating himself to him. And the Holy Ghost is likewise only the *Virtue* and Power of God.

It is objected against this Doctrine I am now establishing, that it is not customary to call the Ambassador by the Name of the King that sends him. I will not enter now upon the Particulars of this Controversy, nor even examine the History of the Centurion, related by St. *Matthew*, Chap. 8. and by St. *Luke*, Chap. 7. which alone were sufficient to decide it. It will be enough for me to remark at present, that tho' this Custom were not us'd by Men in their Transactions, yet it is incontestably so in God's Method. *Drusius (De Nomin. Tetragram. in Epist. ad Conrad. Vorstium)* grants that it may be said, the King doth what the Ambassador transacts in his Name ; but he denies at the same time, that you may give to the Envoy the Name of the King that sends him : And thereupon he will not receive, without some alloy, that Rule of the *Hebrews*, *That the Angel bears the Name of God who sends him*.

But with all the respect I owe this Great Man, I affirm that this Rule of the *Hebrews* is well grounded, it being taken from the Scripture it self, where God declares that he will put his Name on the Angel whom he design'd to send. It is no matter then whether this be the Custom of Kings, or no ; seeing it is clear by this Place, that it is the Custom of God to give his *Name* to his Envys, at least on some occasions, and in extraordinary Cases. And this Name, that I may take notice of it by the by, doth not denote only, that they may call themselves, *the Lord*, *the Jehovah* ; but indeed they have all the Glory, the whole Authority, and all the Power ; yet not absolutely, but only in reference to that Commission they are then honoured withal : that is to say, they appear with as much Majesty, they act with as much Authority and Power, as God would in the like case, were he pleas'd to act without a Medium, and by himself alone. And this is a great reason why God should act thus ; for seeing he could not manifest himself, if the Angels, by whom he was manifested, had never taken his Name upon them, it would have come to pass that the *Jews*, having the knowledg only of Angels, would have totally forgotten God ; whereas the Angels, by taking the Name of God upon them on some extraordinary occasions, put that People from time to time in mind of him, by the Idea of his Presence. After all, seeing God is invisible by his Nature, and cannot manifest himself by himself ; it follows then, that every time he manifests himself by an Angel, this Manifestation will not be regarded as an Appearance of an Angel, but as that of God himself, whom that Angel represents : and consequently, it is not so much the Angel that bears the Name of *Jehova*, and is ador'd by Men, but God himself, that Angel being his Person and Presence. This will be clear, if you regard these three Rules. 1. That according to the Oriental Idiom, the Envys

voys make their Masters speak always directly; as for example, instead of saying, *The Lord saith he is the Jehovah*, they speak thus, *The Lord saith, I am the Jehovah*. 2. They suppress often these Expressions, *The Lord saith*, and speak

absolutely, without making use of that Preface, *I am the Jehovah*. 3. That you ought to supply those Words, and read, *The Lord saith, I am the Jehovah*; and then the Expression will become so natural, as not at all to be mysterious.

## C H A P. XVI.

*Where it is demonstrated that the Chaldee Paraphrasts meant by the Word nothing else but an Angel.*

**B**esides the Moralist Jews, the Chaldee Paraphrasts are also quoted, as if they had known the  $\lambda\delta\gamma\Theta$  of *Plat.* The greatest part of these Paraphrases are stuff'd with Fables and Impieties, not to say, that they are of a late date, and unknown to the Antients who had any Skill in the Oriental Tongues. This is own'd by some of the modern Learned, as *Ribera*, *Iaac Vossius*, Father *Simon*, and others. However, an able Man hath already demonstrated with the utmost evidence (*Gul. Vorstius Discept. de Verbo Dei*) that these Paraphrases never gave the Name of the *Word* to the *Messiah*, when they spake of him expressly; but always call'd him the *King Messiah*, and the *Messiah of the Lord*, or the *Messiah of Israel*, &c. So that St. *John* could not follow a Paraphrase then not extant, and which never gave the Title of *the Word* to the *Messiah of Israel*. But left you should reply, that it is sufficient for this Apostle to have follow'd the Opinion of all the Jews of that time, you need but consider the Words of *Trypho to Justin*, to be assur'd of the contrary. "We wait" saith he, (speaking in the Name of his "Nation") for a Christ, a Man, born of "Men. It is true that this Expression, *the Word*, is very frequent in all these Paraphrases; but it is always attributed to God in the same sense with the *Latin*,

*Numen Jovis*, *Numen Junonis*, for *Jupiter* and *Juno* themselves: Somewhat like our giving a King the Title of *His Majesty*, as, *his Majesty hath resolv'd, order'd, his Majesty said, or did*; instead of, *The King hath resolv'd, order'd, hath said or done*. In the like manner, when these Paraphrases say, the *Word* did, commanded or declar'd any thing, 'tis the same with, *God did, commanded or declar'd it*. I do not say these are absolutely the same Expressions; however these Examples shew that there are in all Tongues some particular Modes of speaking, from the which no such consequence is to be drawn, as if every strange Word contain'd a great Mystery: We deceive ourselves, this Mountain brings forth but a Mouse. Would you have me speak plainly? These Paraphrases by the *Word* design'd only the *Angel* who bare the Name of God, and who spake in his stead; this Term being particularly appropriated to *Messengers* and *Interpreters*. We likewise see, that the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* did thus call (Chap. 18. 15.) the destroying Angel sent to kill the First-born of *Egypt*, because he was intrusted with the Command of God therein, and the Execution of it. *Thine Almighty Word*, saith he, *leapt down from Heaven*, &c.  $\delta\pi\alpha\sigma\delta\omega\alpha\mu\omega\sigma\sigma\tau\alpha\lambda\delta\gamma\Theta$ , &c. "This Word, saith *Maldonat*" (in

## Chap. 16. What the Chaldee Paraphraſts meant by the Word. 55

" (in Joan. 1. 1.) cannot at all be J. C. " of whom it cannot be said that he was " sent to perform the Office of an Exe- " cutioner. Thus those of *Lystra* call'd St. Paul, *Mercury*, or the Interpreter of *Barnabas*, whom they look'd upon as their *Jupiter*; and this because he, *Paul*, was the chief Speaker, *viz.* was the Word of *Barnabas*.

*Hermes*, which is the Name the Greeks give to *Mercury*, signifies an *Interpreter*, and they explain it often by ἀρχή, or the *Word*. " *Hermes*, saith the Author of the Life of *Homēr*, that is to say, " the *Word* (τὸν ἄρχοντα τὸν λόγον). *Phar- nutes* calls him an *Angel* or *Messenger*. *Heracles Ponticus* gives the Name of *Angel* to *Iris*, and the Name of *Word* to *Mercury*: Sometimes he joins the Term *Word* with that of an *Interpreter*, calling *Mercury*, the *Word Interpreter* (ἴρωντος ἀρχή). He also observes that *Iris* was thus call'd, because she brings word (as it were τὴν ἴρωντον ἀρχήν) and that *Hermes* was call'd so, because he is the *Interpreter* of the Gods (as it were τὸν ἴρωντον τῶν θεῶν). At last he gives the reason why Wings are ascrib'd to him, because, saith he, there is nothing so swift as Speech; which made *Homēr* say, that Words had Wings. Hence it comes, no doubt, that we give Wings to *Angels*, as well as to *Mercury*, because they are the *Messengers* and the *Interpreters* of God, τοῖς θεοῖς. Seeing then the Heathens talk'd thus of the *Messengers* of their Gods, and call'd them *Interpreters* and *Words*, I cannot discern any greater Mystery in the *Jewiſh* Paraphraſts, nor why they should not give the same Names to *Angels*, or other *Messengers*, that ſpoke to them on the behalf of God.

*Maldonat* (in Joan. 1. 1.) did really observe well, that the Paraphraſts made use of this Term, when God was treated of, as converſing with and ſpeaking to us, or coming to aid and ſuccour us. This cannot be understood but of a Divine Manifestation by the Ministry of an *Angel*: neither would it have been fur-

prizing, if what they ſaid of the *Angels* they had ſaid alſo of the *Meffiah*, I mean in reſpect to his Commission, but not at all in relation to an inviſible Nature. And then, if you would have it that St. John did imitate the *Jews*, as to the use of this Term, I ſhall agree with you, provided it be in the ienſe we have given, which is both plain, and agreeable to the Scripture.

We have obſerv'd already, p. 17, 18. that the Paraphraſts we ſpeak of do not make uſe of this Term *Word*, but only in thoſe places where the Hebrew, ſpeaking of the Actions and Affections of God, expreſſeth them by the Terms of *Face*, *Eyes*, *Feet*, *Hands*, &c. which are corporeal Parts, and belonging only to Man. We obſerv'd at the ſame time, that theſe ways of ſpeaking, which the Hebrew Text makes uſe of, were ground-ed upon this, that the Angel of God, who appear'd in God's Name, and had his Authority, did moſt commonly appear in the ſhape of a Man. The conſequence I would draw from theſe two Remarks, is evident; and for this reaſon the Paraphraſts uſ'd this Term *Word*, on-ly to denote the Divine Manifestation by Angels, under ſeuiſle Representations, but particularly thoſe of a Human Voice and Shape. Their Testimony then is fo- far from favouring the Idea of a *Meta-physical-Word*, that it ſerves on the con- trary to confirm our *Hypothesis*; which is, that we ought to understand by the *Word*, a ſeuiſle Manifestation of God, either in a bright Cloud, or by a Heav- enly Voice, or by a Human Shape.

It is true that ſome Controverſiſts ob-jeſt to us that Paſſage of the Paraphraſte upon the Psalms, which is the worſt of all, *viz.* that upon Psalm 110. *The Lord ſaid to his Word*. I know not where they had it; for in the Original it is בְּדַבֵּר, and the Latin Interpreter tranſlates it very well, *in Verbo suo*, by, or in his *Word*, which is a mere *Hebraiſm*, in-ſtead of, God hath ſaid. The *Jews* ſpake on this wife, ſaying, בְּדַבֵּר, in or by his Word,

Word, that is to say, by the Command and Order of God. (See *Grotius* on *Joh. 10. 35.*) What is become now of the Mystery? Whence comes such a gross Mistake? The Learned *Hammond*, quoting this Paraphrase in *Luke 1. 2.* doth read it indeed ἡγεμονῶν, to his Word, which is just what these Gentlemen would be at; but, if I am not mistaken, 'tis without any Authority: nor do I think, that if such a Reading were found in any Copy, either in Manuscript, or printed, it ought to be prefer'd to the common Reading, which is grounded, as we have shewn, on the Custom of the *Hebrews*. Besides, we may assert, without any fear of being in the wrong, that if there be any alteration in the original Term, it was not done to favour the Hereticks; we may presume the contrary. It is true indeed that Dr. *Bull*, in his *Defence of the Council of Nice*, quotes a Paraphrase we have not, to prove the false Reading. But it is likely that those who say they have seen it, saw but a *Latin Translation*, which hath *Verbo suo* in the Ablative, as the Grammarians term it, by his Word: and it is the ambiguity of the *Latin Construction*, that impos'd on those who saw not the Original. So true it is that Error always begets a Mystery, and that even a Grammatical Ambiguity is capable to furnish us with high-flown and gorgeous ones. What makes me think so, is this, that I have observ'd the like ambiguity in the Author of the imperfect Work on *St. Matthew* (in *Mat. 8. 8.*) This Evangelist brings in the Centurion speaking, *Lord speak the Word* (ἰδία λόγῳ) And this Author, allegorizing no doubt on the Term *Word*, makes him deliver himself thus: "Lord, you have need only to command one of your Messengers, an Angel, λόγος, and my Servant shall be healed; whereas he meant only that our Saviour should speak the Word: altho I would not condemn absolutely the Explanation of this Author, because it is somewhat plausible, if we regard how the Centurion goes on:

" For I am, saith he, a Man under Authority, having Soldiers under me: " and I say unto this Man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my Servant, Do this, and he doth it. These Expressions seem to insinuate indeed, that he intended J. C. should command some one of his Servants, as he commanded his own. Speak to an Angel, or to any one of your Disciples, to go and heal my Servant, and my Servant shall be healed. And in this sense an Angel, or an Apostle, would have been the *Word* of J. C. even as J. C. himself was the *Word* of the Father. If you take it thus, I shall grant with all my heart, that the Paraphrase in this place means the Messiah by that Term *Word*.

The Judgment of Father *Simon* upon these Paraphrases deserves your notice (*Hist. critiq. du V. T. lib. 2. ch. 18.*) "It is true, saith he, that *Galatine*, and many other Divines after him, made use of these Paraphrases to establish some Articles of our Faith, in opposition to the *Jews*, principally those relating to the *Messiah*: But altho' these Proofs seem conclusive as to the *Jews*, because they are taken out of their Books; yet I do not think it advantageous to the Christian Religion to have recourse to Books stuff'd with Fables. —— Besides, the Passages we believe to favour our Religion, consisting chiefly but in Allegories, it will be easy for the *Jews* to evade them; for we cannot prove the Truth of our Mysteries invincibly by Allegories. But if, notwithstanding all these Discoveries, the Trinitarians will still insist upon these Paraphrases to authorise their pretended Mystery, we shall be alarm'd so little at the advantage they pretend to get by them, that we shall over and above lend them this Passage of the *Targum of Jerusalem*, extremely fit to prove the Pre-existence of their *Word*. *Glossias* relates it (*Philol. p. 22.*) The Paraphrase expounding these Words, Behold, Adam

it become as one of us, brings in the Word speaking to his Father, *Papa*, behold Adam whom you have created, who is your only Son on Earth, as I am your only Son in Heaven. It seems as if the Word was

pleas'd that he had a Brother and a Companion. Shall we never be aliam'd of these Rabbinick Frenzies, or rather of these Platonick Impostures?

## C H A P T E R X V I I

### Concerning the Method of the Sacred Writers, and some of their Disciples, viz. Hermas, Barnabas, &c. in the Interpretation of the Scriptures.

THE Writers of the New Testament being Jews by Birth, did affect, according to the Genius of that People, an analogick Sense and Accommodations, finding every where Relations between the Old and the New Testament. Every body knows how they have adapt'd the History to another, one Event to another Event, and of what nature are their frequent Allusions and Allegories. On this wise, to omit other Examples, what Moses' faith of the Word of God producing the Creature out of nothing, St. John accommodates to that Word of J. C. which forms Men and manifests the Power of God, demonstrating by Miracles that all Creatures obey him: J. C. being not so much the Interpreter of the Will of God, as the Instrument of his Power. You will find this Analogick Sense may be observ'd in most of the Passages of the Old Testament, which the Apostles have applied to the New. Beza (on 2 Cor. 4. 6.) calls this Sense *Anagogical*, that is to say, Spiritual, Sublime, Mystical, and exalted above the pitch of the Letter. See *Sculpt.* (Exerc. Evangeli lib. 10 cap. 62.) where he speaks at large of the manner how the Sayings of the Prophets are accomplish'd analogically under the New Testament. "The Testimonies of the Old Testament, saith he, are not always alleg'd to confirm a thing, but to

illustrate it by an ingenious, and well-contriv'd Accommodation, which is very familiar to the Holy Ghost. The Therapeutes, or Jewish Philosophers of Alexandria, retain'd this way of interpreting, the more willingly, because it was altogether conformable to the Method of the Platonists, among whom they liv'd. Enedius relates, (Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. c. 160.) that they had the merely Allegorical Commentaries of the Antients; and that in expounding the Scriptures they philosophiz'd after the manner of their Predecessors, that is to say, by the way of Figures and Allegories, pretending that the latter is but a Shell wherein many Mysteries are inclos'd.

The most ancient Fathers of the Church, viz. Hermas and Barnabas, did follow this Method of the Jews, searching for a Spiritual Meaning in the Facts and Rites of the Old Testament, in order to adapt them to the New, but yet not so as to bring in such Platonick Ideas as obtain'd some time after in the Christian Religion. The following Fathers having not only carry'd their Allegories too far, and exceeded the antient manner of affecting mystical Senses, but also spoil'd this Method by joining gross Platonism with it, which personaliz'd every thing, and turn'd the Anagogick into an Historical and Literal Sense:

Let

Let us begin with *Barnabas*. The Sacred Writers having said that J.C. was the Rock of the Desert, the Passover, Propitiation, &c. in like manner *Barnabas*, accustom'd to the Method his Nation follow'd ever since the Captivity, accommodates to J.C. many Passages of the Old Testament, which had their mystical and spiritual Truth in him. According to this way of interpreting, the Rock was J. C. intelligibly; David was J.C. analogically. The Antients tempted J. C. because they tempted Moses, or the Angel, who were the Types of the Messiah: So that it might safely be said, that Christ was an *intelligible Moses*; an *intelligible David*; or Rock; and consequently an *intelligible Word*; in the same sense that *Hesychius* calls the Blood of the Eucharist, *intelligible Blood*; that is to say, a mystical Blood, which is conceiv'd such only by our Thought and Mind, not being really so, and in the very Letter. For who can so much as doubt that the Word is J. C. or that J. C. is the Word, by the which God created the World, in the same sense as he is the Passover, or the Rock of the Desert? This is to say, there is found in him mystically that Divine Efficacy, or that powerful Word, which speaks, which commands, and the Creature immediately obeys its Orders. God said, Let there be Light; and there was Light. J. C. said, Let this blind man receive his Sight; and there was Light; the blind man saw it; he performed his Miracles by his Word only. Can you accommodate better the Old Creation to the New? And that so much the more, because the same Word which created the world, acted in the Flesh of J. C. the which is the only inhabited, having descended on it in the shape of a Dove, but into which it had likewise insinuated itself as the principle of his Conception and Birth. But that you may not believe me upon my bare word, I will prove my Hypothesis by *Barnabas* his own Epistle. The most plausible Argument is drawn from Chap. 4. where the Greek

is wanting. "Christ, saith this Father, is the Lord of the Word, to whom God said, before the Foundation of the World, Let us make Man, &c. But it appears by Chap. 5. whereof we have the Original, that *Barnabas* takes these Words in an allegoric and spiritual Sense: Reading alone takes away the difficulty. "God, as he saith, having renewed us by the Remission of our Sins, hath made us as it were Children, and restor'd to us a Form totally spiritual. "For the Scripture speaks thus of us, introducing God as it were speaking to his Son, Let us make Man according to our Image. "And the Lord, beholding our new Nature, hath said to us, Increase, &c. Behold now how he hath Spoken to his Son. I will once more shew you how God hath given you a new Figure in these last Times: "The Lord saith, Behold I make all things new. It is as clear as the Sun, that this Expression, Let us make Man, is applied to the New Creation, to the second Form that God gives us: and that when God hath thus reform'd us by the Spirit of his Son, he hath, as it were said to his Son, Let us make Man. You cannot doubt therefore that the same allegorick Sense is to be look'd for in Chap. 4. which without any ground is taken literally. Whatever God saith according to the Letter, either speaking to the Angels, or enduing himself, may assuredly be fairly in mystic Sense, so have been Spoken to his Son, by whose means he hath made a new Man. As if *Barnabas* should say, What God saith at the time of the first Creation, Let us make Man according to our Image, is found true concerning the New, but in a more sublime Sense, having in this made use of his Son to form Man according to the Image of his Holiness and Justice.

And if *Barnabas* did explain allegorically this Saying, Let us make Man according to our Image; why might not the Fathers in like manner explain these, He spake, and the things were created?

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Hidden and mystical Meanings were always sought for in the Old Testament. This *Ignatius* did in his Epistle to the Ephesians. "There is but one Teacher, " saith he, *that spake, and the thing was done*; and all that he did in silence (not only by teaching, but also suffering) is altogether worthy of his Father. Where you see he applies to J. C. what was said of God the Father; and to the New Creation, what was said of the Old. This is visible by the distinction he makes between the *Speech* and the *Silence* of J. C. between what he perform'd by his Preaching, and what he did by his Obedience and Patience.

Let us go on with *Barnabas*. In Chap. 5, whilst allegorizing on the Land of Promise, which flow'd with Milk and Honey; "We are those (saith he, speaking of us Christians) whom God hath brought into this blessed Land, being nourish'd with the Faith of the Prophets. And carrying on the Allegory in Chap. 6. Enter into the Blessed Land, &c. to which he gives that spiritual Meaning: "Learn what Knowledge saith (יְהוָה), that is to say, the sublime Sense of this Passage) Hope ye, saith He, in Jesus, who is to be manifested to you in Flesh. Could he have recommended better to us the Science of Allegories, which he calls *Gnosticism*, or *Knowledge*, by way of Excellency? In the same Chapter he adapts to J. C. what was said of the Sacrifices of old, and particularly that of Isaac: He finds there a Figure of the Church, as also of J. C., and concludes thus: *This Calf, this Victim is J. C.* (זֶבַח־עֹזֵר־אֲנוֹן) Could he say that the Calf sacrific'd was J. C. and may he not, by the same way of speaking, be call'd the *Word*? Because this was not only his Figure, but also the *Virtue* that actuallized him in the Formation of the New World. In the 7th Chapter he allegorizes strangely upon the Circumcision: He finds there a certain *Cabala*, in the number of the Persons whom Abraham caused to be circumcised; and discovers

there the Name of *Jesus*, as also his Cross, and what not. This Science is pregnant with inventions; it can find J. C. every where, in an Arithmetick Number, 318; in the Plural Number of a Noun, *The Gods have created*; and in the Plural Number of a Verb, *Let Us make Man*. See in Chap. 8, his Spiritual Meanings which he draws from the Prohibition of the Flesh of some Creatures: and taking notice that Moses said this only in a Figure, regarding the mystical Sense, the *Spirit*, and not the Letter; "Moses, saith he, spake thus in Spirit (מִנְחָה־בְּשֻׁרְבָּה־לְאַדְנָה) If then Moses did speak of J. C. when he said, that the *Word created the World*; he did speak of this also in *Spirit*; and it is not true but in a spiritual Sense. In the 9th Chapter, besides the Allegory on the Water of Baptism, and upon the Cross of J. C. whereof he hath found a thousand Figures in the History of the People of old, which he brings to his bent by Violence and Artifice; he seeks particularly for a sublime Sense in the Name of *Joshua*, or *Jesus* the Son of *Nun*. He saith, "That the Father hath shew'd us in *Joshua* every thing that may be said of his Son *Jesus*: Informeth that it may be said, according to Him, that J. C. brought the People of the *Jews* into the Land of *Canaan*, because he had done it in *Joshua* his Figure; or rather, because he did the same in a spiritual Sense. So that J. C. was *Joshua*, by whom so many Miracles were wrought in the Land of *Canaan*, and for the same reason J. C. was the *Word* by which all things were made. I say, the *Word*; for altho *Barnabas* makes no mention of it in all his Epistle, yet he makes an allusion thereto in these Words: *Let Us make Men*; which he applies to J. C. Lastly, *Barnabas* adds, "Behold here *Jesus* again, not the Son of Man, but the Son of God, who appear'd in Flesh in his figure. Who sees not here that *Jesus* the Son, not of a Man, as *Joshua* was, but the Son of God, being born of a Virgin,

Virgin, did manifest himself in Flesh, in a typical and figurative manner, in the Person of *Joshua*? We may say likewise, according to this way of interpreting the Scriptures, that the same Jesus created the World in the Person of that *Spirit*, or of that Word, which spake, and the Creature appear'd — because that first Word was the Type of that other Word, which insinuated it self into J. C. and which said, for example, *Lazarus come forth*, and *Lazarus* came forth immediately out of his Tomb, and from the Dead. That gave Life, and so did this. You may in the same sense, as most of the Fathers did, say that J. C. appear'd to the Patriarchs; because the appearing of the Angels in a Human Shape, was the Type of his Manifestation in Flesh. Hence comes it that *Clement of Alexandria* calls him the *mystical Angel*; the Angel being J. C. in a *Type*; and J. C. — being the Angel in a *Mystery*.

Moreover *Barnabas* continuing his Allegory upon the Sabbath and the Temple, whence he is continually drawing forth mystical Interpretations, and having run over all the Figures of the Old Testament in the spiritual Application he makes of them to J. C. and his Church; he calls this Parables, and concludes: *You have here*, saith he, *all that regards the Glory of J. C. viz. how all things were made for him and by him*. Where by *all things*, without doubt, all those Dispensations of the old Economy are to be understood, which have any relation to him, to his Birth, Death or Resurrection; the which he may be said to have done, not literally, but spiritually, in the Person of the Prophets who were his Figures. This is so clear by the sequel and coherence of his Discourse, that I have been amazed at the Confidence of Dr. *Bull*, who, in his Defence of the Council of Nice, p. 67. dares to quote these Words, as if *Barnabas* had said them of the first Creation. For it is so far from these Expressions being serviceable to his Hypothesis, that

they demonstrate on the contrary how these Words, *that all things were made by J. C.* are to be understood; that is, because either he did them in his Types, as *Barnabas* teaches us here, or because he meant that the same Power, or one like to that which created the old World, and inspired the Prophets, did dwell in J. C. Whoever knows the Character of *Barnabas* but a little, must be very conceited, if he gives any other Sense to his Words. See here the Judgment of Mr. *Du Pin* concerning him, (*Bibl. Tom. i. at the Word Barnabas*) "The Epistle of this Father, saith he, is full of forc'd Allegories, on the Holy Scriptures, and with extraordinary Explications deviating from good Sense — But these Allegories, these mystical Explications and Fables, hinder not this Epistle from being his whole Name it bears. You must have but a small insight into the Genius of the Jews, and the first Christians brought up in the Synagogue, if you believe that such kind of Thoughts could not be theirs. On the contrary, this was their very Character, they learn'd of the Jews, to turn the Scriptures into an Allegory. — We ought not then to wonder, that St. *Barnabas*, a Jew by Birth, and writing to the Jews, should explain allegorically many of the Passages of the Old Testament, and apply them to the New. — Every body knows that the Books of the first Christians are full of this sort of Fables and Allegories.

Mr. *Le Maine* is of the same Judgment in his Notes on *Barnabas*. To conclude, the Term *γνῶσις* is very familiar to this Author, he means by it a sublime and profound Sense. This appears by his inately extolling this Knowledge (which he also names *Science* and *Wisdom*) above the Virtues which accompany Faith. This way of distinguishing Science from Faith, was follow'd by *Origen*; it seems that *Gnosticism* was brought in by this Allegorick Science of the Scriptures, and after-

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afterwards degenerated into Poetical Speculations and an Heathenish Philosophy. The first Method was Jewish, the second Platonic. All which seems to prove that the Author of this Epistle was a true Gnostic: I mean one of the first of them, who imitated the Jewish Cabala in their mystical Interpretations of the Old Testament, which was accounted a sublime Science; but not one of those Gnosticks, who were afterwards decried for converting that Allegoric Science into a Philosophy merely Pagan. For these last who were Gentile Profelytes, imagining they had the same right with the Profelyte Jews, to the use of these Allegoric Interpretations, adapted presently the Theogony of their Poets, and the Ideas of Plato, to the Evangelical Truths. The former sought for a mystical sense of the Law, but the latter the sublime sense of Philosophy, both of them in relation to Jesus Christ and his Holy Doctrine.

Those of the latter sort who passed the Bounds in this Method, and made so wide a Pleroma, were called Heretics: but those that used it with a greater Caution and Modesty, and who carried the Pleroma no further than the three Aéons (which seemed to have some ground in the Scriptures) and kept a Decorum better in their Resemblances, had the good fortune to pass for Orthodox even to Posterity. I think it is better to argue thus about the Author of this Epistle, than to say (with Dr. Hammond), that he opposeth Cabala to Cabala, and that by the Term γνῶσις, he attacks the false Science of the Gnosticks. For it doth not appear that he disputes with any body, unless it be only against the Jews, who would not receive his Allegories: However it doth not appear that Gnosticism, such as it was at that time confined to mere Allegory on the Scripture, was then decried. On the contrary this Author recommends it, and that not in opposition to the false one, as Clement of Alexandria did afterwards, but absolutely as it is in it

self. As for me, I doubt not at all, that the Jargon of the ensuing Fathers, who blended the Platonic Studies with the Jewish Method, did proceed from this way of philosophizing allegorically on the Scriptures, which was very innocent at first; or rather they coupled together the two Methods of allegorizing, namely the Oriental and the Greek. Clement, Hermas and Barnabas, carried on their Allegory according to the Oriental Custom, in order to find out the mystic sense: The ensuing Fathers, newly come out of Plato's School, and having an extraordinary conceit of his Principles, did from an innocent Allegory build up a Pagan Philosophy, which, in giving us three Hypostases, gives us also three Gods literally so, and well told.

Father Simon both saw and own'd this Truth in his Supplement to the Ceremony of the Jews (pag. 16.) "Some of the Jews, saith he, applied themselves to the Platonic Philosophy, which they have blended with their Phrenzies, whence arose a great part of their Cabalistic Sciences. We ought also to attribute to this their studying of the Platonic Philosophy, many Expressions found in their ancient Allegorical Books, which are not far distant from those the Christians use to explain the Mystery of the Trinity. Let us consider well this Remark. It demonstrates that the Trinity was not drawn from the Christian Religion: for if the Platonic Jews, who had not a grain of Christianity, did talk of this Mystery like the Christians, and that we ought to attribute these Expressions only to the Mixture of the Platonic Philosophy with their Phrenzies, it will follow then that the Christians likewise, either brought this Doctrine out of the School of Plato, or took it from the Phrenzies of the Jews: and we are induced to believe this to be so, because the Fathers who talked of it came out of that School, and professed Platonism, before they were ingaged to Christianity,

or

or at least before they had betook themselves to the Study of the Scriptures, as *Zalin, Altimagras, Tatian, Theophilus, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, &c.* who were all professed Sophists. Shew us, I pray, but one Writer who spake of it from a Principle of Religion, without bringing in the Prejudices of Philosophy. Did this come to pass, because there were no Christians, who without having studied *Plato*, could speak of the *Word* out of the Scriptures alone, if so be the Scriptures had spoken of it in the sense of *Plato*? Where is that Christian that talked of it upon the Basis of Religion alone? Let him be produced. There have been no doubt some who wrote concerning Religion, but we have lost their Works, and why? Because they had not the stamp of *Plato*. Moreover, seeing these Gentlemen maintain that the Christians of *Judea* had the same Sentiments in this Affair with the *Gentile* Christians, whence comes it that no Fathers but the *Gentile* are produced, and not so much as one of the Brethren of the Circumcision, and Successors of St. James? Are there none but Philosophers that can write of the Mysteries of Religion? The Writings of *Hegeſippus*, the most considerable of the Christian Jews of whom we have any account, perish'd because of his Errors; as *Valesius* upon *Eusebius* observes it, viz. because he spoke not the Language of *Plato*. The rest had the same Fate, there being but few that remain, as *Barnabas* and *Hermas*. But have these talked of a *Pre-existent Word*? Not at all, unless it be in Allegory. The Reason of this, I pray? Certainly because they found it not in the Christian Religion, nor yet in the Jewish; and having not studied in the School of *Plato*, they could not bring it thence into the Church of J. C.

As to the Books of *Hegeſippus* which perished because of their Errors, I remember that the *Defender of the Fathers* doth somewhat exclaim, that *Valesius* did not declare expressly that they per-

ished by reason of any Errors contrary to *Platonism*. A mere wrangling! As if the Doctrine of *Plato* were, not at that time, and many Ages after, the only Rule by which Truth and Error were determin'd. *Valesius* in this place speaks of two sorts of Books that perished, because of their Errors. The first, that gave him occasion to mention the other, were the *Hypotypes* of *Clement of Alexandria*, who had positive Errors wherewith *Platonism* was offended. Pray read the 109 Cod. of *Photius*, where this Critic relates them. I dare say that the *Eternity of Matter*, the *Transmigration* or the *Revolution* of *Souls*, the *Commerce of Angels with Women*, and other such like Errors, which *Photius* ascribes to *Clement*, troubled not much the good *Platonists*. We know that for the greatest part these were their Darlings. What was it then, at which they were so much offended? Those other Errors which overthrew the *Platonic Hypotheses* concerning the Generation and Incarnation of the *Word*, viz. "The Son's being numbered among the Creatures; and that neither of the two *Words* that came out of the Father was incarnated, not so much as the lesser of them; but only that a certain Virtue flowing from the *Word* it self, did infinuate it self into the Minds of Men, and there became their Understanding or Reason. This good Father believed no other Incarnation than that of Human Reason, which flowed out like a Ray from the Substance of God, and descended into the Flesh of Men, to become their Guide and Light. He was a true Quaker."

The other Books, *Valesius* names are those of *Hegeſippus* and *Papius*, which in relation to *Platonism* could not be guilty of other Errors but those of Omission: that is to say, they perished because of their Simplicity, and because they talked not like *Plato*. And we have reason to believe the same Fate had likewise attended some other of the Anti-

ents that remain, which, as *Photius* judg'd, are too simple and too much refer'd in relation to the Divinity of J. C. but that some small respect for them preserved them. The first Ages regarded them as parts of the Holy Scripture, and this Credit they had got in the Church, preserv'd them from Shipwreck. The *Defender* is then to know, that the Tenets about the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*, did always regulate the Fate of Books and Authors; and that *Orthodoxy* and *Heterodoxy* were judged of, according to these Favourite Tenents of *Plato*. Why I pray, have the four first General Councils, of which the World rings so much, destroyed so many Books and Men? Was it not for these two Tenents? All the rampant Disputes ever since turn'd upon thole Hinges. The reason hereof is, for that the Truth of these two Articles lies in an *indivisible Point*, all around are Precipices of Error; there being so small a distance between Truth and Error, that it is altogether imperceptible. The *Tritonitarians* are divided into *Real* and *Nominal*. Among the *Real* Dr. *Sherlock* hath his particular Hypothesis, the Bishop of *Gloucester* his, as also Mr. *How*. Amongst the *Nominal*, the Bishop of *Salisbury* is of one Opinion, Dr. *Walton* of another, Dr. *South* differs from them both. Range them by Hundreds, there will not be one that will keep to the precise Point, that forms this Chimerical Orthodoxy, which is boasted of by every one, but attained to by none, for they treat one another as Heretics. Here is a large Field for you to scour about, and raise a thousand nice Questions in, which the most acute can't perceive, and to find Heresies in those that have had the Misfortune to displease you. Must an overgrown Bishop be depos'd, whose See lies convenient for me, or a Competitor stops in his Career? I have no more to do but only examine them about these two Points in question; if they have not found the *indivisible Point* precisely, and who can do it? They are

undone: I will prove demonstratively that their Opinion is *Heretical, Impious* and *Blasphemous*. I shall call both the *East* and *West* to my Aid: and what is more, I shall have the Pleasure to see three or four hundred Bishops assembled in a General Council, who shall unanimously vote for me, for the accused is always in the wrong; the Thunderbolts and Anathemas shall follow. Thus the whole World will be in a Flame for a Trifle. Alas! the Memory of such a Number of vain Disputes between *Nestorius* and *Eutyches* cannot be renewed, without making the Christian World to blush. But whoever could give us the secret History of all the antient Councils, like to that of the Council of Trent, would certainly infinitely oblige the Christian World.

But lastly, perhaps the Defender did not perceive my having answer'd his trifling Difficulty before hand: let us then make him sensible of it. Let us examine the Relish of the Antients, and see what Books they have prefer'd for us, what Character they bear, and of what Stamp they are. I told you already, that they have not left us any Father of the Christians of the Circumcision, but only some Gentiles brought up in the School of *Plato*. We have indeed a *Justin*, *Athenagoras*, *Theophilus*, *Tatian*, *Irenaeus*, *Clement of Alexand.*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, and some others of the same sort, Fathers indeed who breathe nothing but Platonism. This is the precious Relick Antiquity has left us: It is easy then to draw the consequence, What Books hath it destroyed? All those that shrank *Plato*, that spake not as *Plato*. We do the *Defender Justice*, if from the Books that Antiquity chose, we point out those it rejected. He hath then lost his Cause; for the Collection we have, could not be such by Chance, the Caprice of the Times, or such like Accidents: No, it is too uniform; Choice presid'd here at least as to the Character of these Books; but Time and the Fate of

of Libraries, may have had a share in the rest.

I return to my Subject, and must observe here, that if the Allegories of *Barnabas* are very evident, because they are so frequent and characteriz'd by the Terms of *Spirit* and *Figure*, which he makes use of to denote them to be so, yet this happens not always. The Fathers speak them out often so absolutely, that it is only the Matter it self that can make us discern them. Thus the Allegories of *Origen* have often deceived his Readers : " For this Father, as Mr. *Huet* observes " it (*Origen. Quat. 14.*) passing often " from the Explication of the Letter to a " Spiritual Sense imperceptibly, his " Readers took his Allegories for Dog- " matical Assertions. What he hath said of *Origen* may be applied to all the rest of the Fathers : *Irenaeus* for example (*Lib. 4. cap. 37.*) speaks out (in downright Terms, without any hint of a Figure) an Allegory he made upon the Spies sent by *Josua* to *Jericho* : " *Rahab* " the Harlot, saith he, in receiving the " Spies, conceal'd in her House the Fa- " ther, Son and Holy Ghost. Who would not believe, if you take this literally, as the *Trinitarians* are wont, but that these Spies were actually the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* in a human Shape, there being nothing in the Words here to hint the *Adaptation* and *Allegory*? Really, if *Irenaeus* had said, as he might very well at this rate, that *Abraham* receiving the Angels that went to destroy *Sodom*, gave a Dinner to the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*; a Mystery would certainly have been found in these Words, pretending that *Abraham* did entertain these three Persons of the Deity, who appeared to him in the Form of three Angels or three Men ?

What difference is there, I pray, between this way of speaking we now suppose, and what *Irenaeus* really made use of? None, and you must grant, that if you think you have good ground, from such like Expressions, to make a su-

preme God in three Persons, of the three Angels; you may likewise conclude the Spies of *Jericho*, to have been the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, really and literally so. For whatever may be said to the contrary, it is as impossible that Angels should be God, as for the Spies to be so. Surely the Repugnancy in the Nature of the things themselves, which Authors compare mutually, ought always to determine us to look for a figurative and allegoric sense there, especially when it appears to us, that these Allegories are agreeable to the Genius and Custom of those Authors, or at least of their Predecessors and Masters; it being certain, that tho' the Disciples often alter the Method of their Masters, yet there will still remain some Footsteps of the antique Doctrine, betraying and discovering their Innovations. This is the Lot of the *Platonic Fathers*, as we shall show hereafter.

For the present the Example of *Irenaeus* is sufficient to inform us, that according to the same way of speaking, which calls the Spies the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, we may also say that *J. C.* was the *Word* which created the World, and the Angel that appeared to the Patriarchs. See what *Annotator Feuerdantius* saith on this Passage of *Irenaeus*. " An old Copy adds the Word *Three* to " the Spies, which would agree very " well with the three Divine Hypostases, " had not the Scripture assured us that " there were but *Two* and not *Three*. *Justin* hath also much the same Allegory in his Dialogue. It is likely that *Irenaeus* carried on his Allegory but to the *Father* and *Son*, in relation to the two Spies : but for fear the *Holy Ghost* should be thereby excluded, some Knave put him in too ; and then the Word *Three* must be added to the *Spies*, that so all might be adjusted to the three Divine Persons. Thus various Readings proceed from the Boldness of the Orthodox : but however it be, you see the Allegory ; either reject it in this Place, or acknowledg

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ledg it every where else, where there is the like necessity for it. As the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* were allegorically in the Spies of *Jericho*; in like manner J. C. was allegorically in all the Dispensations of old, in the *Word* that created the World, in the Angels and the Prophets that spake to Men; because, if I may say so, these Dispensations were the Figures of the great Economy of J. C. or rather of God the *Father*, manifesting himself in the *Flesh* of his *Son*. Therefore *Irenaeus* calls it the Dispensation which was from the Beginning. You may see what *Vossius* saith in his Notes concerning these Allegories of *Barnabas* and the other Fathers: "It is known by all, saith he, how these first Christians interpreted the Scriptures, after a mystic and superstitious manner; I was like to say childish and foolish." *Coteler* saith almost the same, and shews their Absurdities. But take this along with you, that these dull Allegories did not by far so much Mischief, as that Christianity in Masquerade, which some other Fathers borrowed from *Plato*. It is of these you may more justly say, than of the Allegorists (according to one of our Critics) that the Day these good Fathers were writing so many philosophic Visions, they voided a Purge, (*Purgamentum aliquod evacasse*.)

Let us now come to *Hermas*, who is as well stored with Visions and Parables as *Barnabas*: At least his Method is the same. In his Parable or Similitude the 9th, §. 12, he saith, "That the Rock is the Son of God; now the Rock is of old, because the Son of God is more ancient than any Creature, inasmuch as he assisted in the Council of his Father, in order to form the Creature. All this is said in a mystic and an allegoric sense, to explain that the Father did all in regard to his Son and the new Creation: The Author having said as much in his first Vision, §. 4, concerning the Church: for asking of the Angel, "Why the Church of God

" is an old Woman; the Angel answereth, "because she was the first thing that was created, and that it was by reason of her the World was made (It is likely, in the Greek it was δι τοντον, which the Translator rendered not *per illam*, but proper *illam*) You see then that this Father saith no more of J. C. than he doth of the Church; and that these Words *antiquior omni Creatura* mean the same thing with *anus prima omnium creatarum*, which are true only in a mystic sense, but false in the Letter. Consequently then J. C. is from the Beginning in the same sense, that the Church is so: I mean in the Decree and Design of God, which the Author expresseth by his being in the Council of the Father, which he borrowed manifestly from the Author of the Book of Wisdom. I shall now produce a remarkable Instance of the Alteration that ensued as to the Tenent it self, notwithstanding the Terms remained the same. You see that *Hermas* saith here, *the Son of God is more ancient than any Creature*, and that he speaks so allegorically: Let us get over one Age or two, and you shall see *Origen* making use of the same Expression, but in an Arian sense: "The Holy Scriptures, saith he (*Lib. 5. contra Cels.*) do cover the Son of God to us, as the most ancient of all the Creatures" (*πρωταρτον οικτυντον των θηλημηματων*) He means that he was created a little before the World: but let us return to our Subject.

*Justin Martyr*, who first taught the Pre-existence of the Word, imitating the Notion of *Hermas*, did teach the Pre-existence of Christians no less than that of Christ himself, whilst (*Apol. 2.*) he saith, "That all those who were Partakers of the Word or Reason, as well Greeks as Barbarians, were Christians; and consequently Christians did not commence yesterday or to day, but were always and every where a principio, saith he, from the beginning; attributing to them the very Prerogative

of the Word it self. These good Men turn'd themselves every way to ward off the Re-roach of Novelty, wherewith Christianity was charged. In like manner *Eusebius*, endeavouring to prove that the Christian Religion was not new, maintains that the Patriarchs protest it, and that it was instituted from the beginning (*Hist. Eccles. Lib. c. 4.*) Thus much he cannot advance but in a mystic sense, as he observes it himself, because all those, who acted justly and served that God who is above all, were Christians. Consequently then Christ could not converse otherwise with them, but in the same manner as they professed Christianity; which cannot be true, but by way of *Analogy* and *Accommodation*. Christ then pre-existed, as the Christian Religion and Christians did pre-exist.

Let us return to *Hermas*. It is manifest that he allegoriz'd, even by his entitling his third Book, where he speaks of the Pre-existence of J. C. *Similitudes* or *Parables*, which carry on throughout spiritual and mystic senses, as is evident by *Similitude 5.* where he explains the Parable of the Father of a Family in a theological manner, in relation to the *Father*, the *Holy Ghost*, and the *Son*. The *Father* in the Plan of his Allegory is the *Landlord*, the *Holy Spirit* is the *Son of the Household*; and he who out of Allegory is called the *Son*, is but a Servant in the Allegory. "The Landlord, saith he, is the same who created all things, "the Son is the *Holy Ghost*, and the "Son of God is the Servant. He goes on, and adds a little after: "The Holy Ghost infinuated himself into the Body wherein God was to dwell; and "this Body whereinto the *Holy Ghost* did "infinuate himself, having served the "Holy Ghost, and having been faithful "to him always, did obtain the Approbation of God by his Labours and Obedience. By the *Holy Ghost* cannot be meant here the second Person, which is called the Divine Nature of J. C. as Dr. *Bull* pretends; for who sees not that

*Hermas* speaks here of that Spirit of Sanctification, which prepared the Body of J. C. for Prophecy, and consecrated it for a Temple for God to dwell in? And seeing this Idea of the Holy Spirit's being infus'd into the Body of J. C. is so conformable to what the Holy Scriptures deliver concerning it, you must be very extravagant if you think that *Hermas* differed from it? Besides, what could he mean, if his sense were the same with that Dr. *Bull* attributes to him? Would he introduce two Sons of God, so opposite one to the other? The one who serves and obeys; and the other who is served and obeyed; and what is yet more strange, two Sons of God in the self-same Person of J. C. our Lord. "The Son," saith *Hermas*, is the *Holy Spirit*, and "the Son of God is the Servant. Now the Divine Nature of J. C. do denoted by the *Spirit*, and that the Servant signifies the *Human Nature*, you will have two Sons according to the very Letter. Thus the Orthodox embroil all things to fish for Mysteries in Troubled Water; whereas nothing is more clear than the meaning of *Hermas*. He allegorizeth and would say, By him whom the Parable calls the Son, I mean nothing else but the *Holy Spirit*; and by him whom the Parable calls a Servant, I mean J. C. our Lord, who out of the Parable is the proper Son of God: And behold here the ground of my Allegory, viz. that the *Holy Spirit*, who infinuated himself into J. C. becoming his Director and Master, may justly be compar'd to the Son of the Family; but J. C. himself having always obeyed the *Holy Spirit*, must be compared to a Servant. It is therefore in Allegory that J. C. is the Servant; and so likewise in Allegory, that the *Holy Spirit* is the Son of God: It is in Allegory that the Church is the first of all the *Creatures*; and consequently in Allegory, that the Son of God is more ancient than all the *Creatures*, and that he assisted at the Council of God. The whole is Allegory in *Hermas*, the whole Vision,

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*Vision*, *Similitude* and *Parable* there. The Faith in his Writings (*Simil.* 9. §. 13, and 15.) and all the other Vertues are called *Holy Spirits*; he ushers them in like Virgins well appareld, kissing the *Son of God*, who also lie with *Hermas* himself as with a Brother. The Fiction of Persons is so familiar to this Author, that if you would find a Person of the Trinity there, you shall but catch at a shadow. Let it then be acknowledged by all, that we ought not to look for any thing but Allegories and Similitudes in this Book of his, bearing the same Title. Whereas in the second Book entitled: the *Commandments*, where the Doctrines are set forth more simply, he speaks not from the very first Commandment, but of one God the Creator; which is the whole Idea he gives us of this supreme Being, without any mention of three Persons, of an eternal Generation, or Incarnation. Which demonstrates that he had a different Idea from that of a *Consubstantial Trinity*, or of three equal *Hypostases*, whatevver he said elsewhere of the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*.

But as this Allegory of *Hermas* touching Christ milled the *Platonic Fathers*, who took it literally, being prejudiced by the Philosophy they were brought up in: There is another in the sixth Commandment, by which they were no less impos'd on: "There is, saith he, two Genius's in Man, the one of Justice, the other of Iniquity. The Greek had it, no doubt, *two Angels*; and so this Passage is read in the Translator of *Origen* (*Hom.* 35. in *Luc.*) *duos Angelos*. Hereupon the Fathers have gravely handed down to us, that there are *two Angels*, the one of Good, the other of Evil, that attend a Man from his Birth. (Just as they have told us, that the Angels fell in Love with the Daughters of Men, having mistaken the Allegory of the Souls, that delight to abide in our Bodies.) But let the Fathers talk on. This being taken in a literal sense, is ridiculous and untrue; but it

disculps and contrary to Scripture, especially the evil Angel. Can it be doubted here, that *Hermas* intended only to allegorize upon the twofold Inclination in Men towards Good and Evil? It is certain that the *Chaldeans*, *Jews* and *Mahometans*, as also some *Pagan Philosophers*, did affect such like Allegories, and personalized these two Inclinations. Every thing was an Angel to the *Jews*, especially with the *Pharisees* when they disputed against the *Sadduces*, who denied their Existence. As to the *Heathens*, we have shewn before, that the Wisdom of *Socrates* was his *Demon* and *Genius*. We have stumbled at this Oriental Philosophy which allegorized upon every thing, spiritualized and personalized all. It is by the like Mistake that gross *Platonism* took literally, what the *subtil Platonism* said only in Allegory; and made three *Hypostases* of the three Divine Powers, concurring in the Creation of the World. Now these Divines, who turn'd these two Inclinations in Man into two Angelical Persons, are the same that metamorphosed the Power of God, which created the World, into a Divine Person, a Son begotten of God, and consubstantial with his Father. Will you trust 'em still, and boast notwithstanding of the Acuteness and Penetration of our Age, yet foolish enough to be befooled with all these Chimeras? Shall we never comprehend, that what *Moses* said in a literal sense, that by the Word of God, or his Command all things were created in the beginning; the Apostles spake it in a mystic sense of J. C. who is the Word of the Father which created all things, to wit, in the new Creation, having put all things into a new Form and Order, as well the Angels in Heaven, as the Men here on Earth?

It is evident by *Clemens Romanus*, that the Antients made use of continual allusions to the first Creation, wherein they fought for a mystic sense, in reference to the second, performed by J. C. In his second Ep. c. i. he speaks thus of our

Redemption: " When we were without Understanding, and worshipped Stone and Wood, God had pity on us —— for he call'd us when we were not in Being, and would have us to pass from no Being into a Being (εκδιαβολος εν των ουκ εστιν ημας εις οντας, και ιδιανος εν μη οντος αναγνωστας) Without doubt he speaks of the New Creation, and that in Terms as strong as were used in reference to the First, causing us to pass from no Being into a Being; as if we were form'd out of nothing, when we were reformed by the Gospel. These Terms seem to be absolute; but we ought not to be deceived by them, and will do well if we seek here for a comparative sense, considering that Authors neglect very often to use the Particles denoting this Figure, which soften the Expression; as for example, *As it were*, *That we may say so*. If I may speak thus. All may perceive, that if Clement had said of J. C. as he might have done, *That he called us when we were not in Being, and made us to exist out of Nothing*; these Words would have been stretched, as if they attributed our Creation out of Nothing to J. C. It would have been said, Behold here J. C. particularly described, to be him that *calls Things not in being, as if they were*. Now by a stronger Inference this sense ought to be given them, seeing they were spoken of the Father, who is the Creator of Heaven and Earth: yet we must agree however herein, for the Scope of the Subject requires it, that they intend only the New Creation; and consequently must own, that when the Sacred Authors and their Disciples, seem to attribute the Creation of all Things to J. C. we have the same Reason to look on such like Expressions as Allegories, which set before our Eyes the forming of the New Creature, by Representations drawn from the old Creation.

The same Clement (Ep. 1. c. 12.) allegorizeth upon the Scarlet Rope of *Rasab*. Good Critics do not question this,

tho he speaks as if his Allegoric Sense were the only true one, for he praiseth not only the Faith, but also the Prophecy of this Woman, declaring by it the future Redemption by the Blood of J. C. " This Allegory of *Clemens*, saith Cotelier in his Notes, is approved of by many of great Note, quoting the Fathers that followed him therein. Note, he calls it an Allegory, altho in *Clement* it hath all the Air of a simple and natural Sense. If it be so, his History of a *Phenix* ought not to seem so strange to us; it is a Fable containing a great Truth in his Opinion; he makes use of it as of an ingenious Allegory, that seems to have been made expressly to represent to Men the Doctrine of the Resurrection.

As to the rest, whenever *Clement* doth not allegorize, he explains to us simply his Sentiment about the *Word* and the *Trinity*. As to the former, he saith in Chap. 27. of his 1st Ep. to the *Corinthians*: " That God founded all things by the Word of his Power, and that he can destroy them by the same Word (εν λογῳ, utroque) Whence it is evident, that the Word in his sense is only the Power and Efficacy of God, by which as he created the World, he can also destroy it when he pleaseth. This agrees with the Scriptures saying, *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the Breath of his Mouth*: Psal. 33. 6. and that by the same Breath he destroys the Wicked, Isa. 13. 4. & 2 Thess. 2. 8. We cannot find here the *Platonic Ideas* of a Personalized *Word*; so that *Plotinus* had reason to complain (Bibl. Cod. 126.) that *Clement* did not speak of J. C. in that sublime Style, which is made use of when God is spoken of. His Simplicity has offended those that love only the high-flown Philosophy of *Plato*. For whereas a *Platonic Christian* would never have omitted on such an occasion, to inculcate that God the Father created all things by his Son, who is his *Word* and eternal *Wis-*

Wisdom; *Clement* is dumb here, and contents himself to attribute the Creation to the Power or the Command of God. Elsewhere, when he speaks expressly of J. C. he withholds himself from giving him any other Excellencies or Titles, than those resulting from the Offices he possesteth by the Gift of God, as a Recompence for his Sufferings, *viz.* those of an *High-Priest* and *Lord*, never quoting any other Passages but those that

serve to this purpose. As to his *Trinity*, nothing is more simple; for being willing to move the *Corinthians* to Concord and Union, he alledged this Motive among the rest: "Have we any other but the same God, the same Christ, and the same Spirit of Grace shed upon us? This is a *Trinity* of a Man truly *Apostolic*, one *God*, one *Messiah*, and one *Spirit* shed upon the Faithful.

## C H A P. XVIII.

*Of the Method of the refin'd Platonists, and of Allegory in General.*

**F**R OM these Disciples of the Apostles, let us come to the Disciples of *Plato*. Peruse the *Platonist* Writers, and you'll therein find yet some remains of well contrived *Platonism*. They, having conceived the *Ideas* and *Archetypes* of all-Creatures, which are in the visible *World*, to be in the *intelligible World*, did easily invent a *Spiritual* and *Intelligible* *Gospel*, which is the *Substance* and *First Form* of the *sensible Gospel*; a *Dissimulation* which *Origen* did not fail to make, as he distinguishes between the *exemplary* and *ideal Word*, different from the *sensible Word*; and as he expresses it in his second *Tom. on John*: "A Word which was in God, and which was as different from that which was made Flesh, as an Original is from the Copy, Substance and Reality from the Shadow. They use the Comparison of an Architect, who has in his Mind the Idea and Plan of a House he intends to build. Whereon, they giving themselves liberty, find all the Wonders of our *Gospel* in the Ideas of the Divine Understanding. If in the *sensible Church* there be found an Oracle and Interpreter from God, born of the Father by the

*Holy Ghost*, making the new *Creature* by the Power and Wisdom, which he has received from the Father: To this they make another Answer in the *intelligible Church*, a *Word* proceeding from the Bosom or Understanding of God, begotten of his Substance, who is the *Eternal Wisdom* of God, and secondary Cause of all things subsisting in the *World*. Take off the veil of Allegory, or rather suppose all that to be Allegory; and 'tis a rational Philosophy, which reduces all to God's eternal Decrees as the prime Cause of all existent Beings, but particularly of *Christ*, who being with respect to his *Essence* the only Son and *Providence* of all *Creatures*, consequently is in God's Understanding the *Idea*, which God immediately begets, whereon all others depend: He is, I say, the noblest *Idea*, or as some speak, the *Idea of Ideas*. And if they found this *Christ* in the *Ideas* and *Decrees* of God, it is not to be wonder'd if they found him also in the ancient Dispensation of Angels, while 'tis not more difficult seeing him in those first Sketches, than in the Design and *Idea* which God had fram'd of him. Thus far I perceive right *Platonism*, I see

in it the Foot-steps of what it was, when in its Purity; and I at the same time observe in it fair remains of ancient Allegory, either of the *Jews* or of the *Chaldeans*, who delighted in profound Senses and theological Interpretations. But I no sooner cast my eye on those eternal Substances, conceiv'd as real *Emulations*, those *Emanations* as real *Generations*, and those *Generations* as subsisting *Persons*; than I see only deprav'd *Platonism*, as absurd as the Theology of the Poets, and as unpolish'd as the Religion of the most superstitious Vulgar.

To make this Truth the more evident, 'twill be necessary to say somewhat of Allegory, and of the use which the Antients made of it. But we must, as I promis'd in Page 64, at the same time shew that Disciples who oftentimes change their Masters Method, do nevertheless retain certain Remains of the ancient Discipline, which betrays them, and discovers their Innovations: That is, we will shew the tracks of the antient manner of allegorizing, even in those very men who have abandon'd the Allegory of the three *Principles*, and chosen the literal Sense of three *Hypotheses*. I have already given some account of it, which ought to be recall'd to mind by the Reader, to join to what I have farther to say thereon.

*Allegory* is a Figure in Speech, whereby one thing is expressed, and another intimated, by rising from the literal to a nobler and more theological Sense. See *Grotius* on *Matth.* ch. i. 22. I shall not here speak of the Enigmatical Science of the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians*, but come directly to the Philosophy which is most known to us. But before I come to Particulars, I must advertise my Reader, that if he would be fully inform'd on this Head, he may read all the 5th Book of the *Stromates* of *Clemens Alexandrinus*. I'll content myself with quoting thence the following Words, which give us a general Idea of the Antients Method in the use they made of Allegory. "All

those, says that Father, who have treated of Divine Matters, as well Greeks as Barbarians, concealing the *Principles* of things, wrap'd the Truth in Enigma's, Symbols, Allegories and Metaphors, as intricate as those of the Oracles. — Even the Poets, who learnt Theology of the Prophets (perhaps of the *Egyptian* Prophets), did often philosophize according to the hidden Sense, &c. *vīrōsias*.

Having made this general Observation, I pass to somewhat more particular. A great noise has been made in the World of the Opinion of *Pythagoras* concerning the Transmigration of Souls. The literal Sense which has been given to this Opinion, has been almost generally receiv'd; and there have been but few Persons who perceiv'd that it only run on a mere Allegory, thro want of duly reflecting on the Genius of ancient Philosophy.

*Calixtus Secundus Gurio* was one of those who saw thro the Mystery of it (*Aranei*, p. 42, &c.) "As to the Opinion of Pythagoras, says he; I can never persuade my self that that Learned Philosopher ever came to such a degree of Absurdity, as to believe, that the Souls of Men passed out of one Body into another. Let us not doubt but that he thereby intended to signify the Change whereunto Matter is subject, making it continually pass from one form to another; a Metamorphosis which that Philosopher call'd *Regeneration* (*Palingenesiam*) or a *Metempsychosis*, which, according to him, is nothing but the Transmigration of the Spirit infus'd in Matter, and with it transmitted into all the several Forms which it puts on. 'Twas the misunderstanding of this Revolution of Souls, which made some Heretics say, that *Adam's Soul* had pass'd into *Jesus Christ*, in misapplying some Texts of Scripture where *Christ* is called the second *Adam*, and which suppose a kind of Analogy between the one and the other. This by a like Mistake that some others held that the

the Soul of *Elias* had passed into the Body of *John Baptist*, grounding themselves on these Words, that *John* came in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*: and not comprehending that those Words refer to the Conformity of Zeal and Courage between those two Prophets. But when once the right understanding of a mere Figure in Speech comes to be lost, and the literal Sense prevails, into what Extravagances are we not capable of falling? Witness the monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation, which owes its birth to the Ignorance of an Allegory a little strain'd.

Again, Have not some fallen into a prodigious Error, by literally taking that Expression of the Apostle, where he says, that *Melchizedec* was, without Father, without Mother, and without Descent? Have not Men infer'd from those Words, that *Melchizedec* was not of the Posterity of *Adam*, as other Men are? Some having suppos'd him a *Seraphim*, *Man* consubstantial with the eternal Son of *God*; others that he was an *Angel*; others the *Holy Ghost*, others the *Son of God* himself; and lastly, others a *Power* superior to the *Son of God*, from which the *Son of God* had receiv'd his everlasting High-Priest-hood. I am ashamed for Christians, when I think with what Superstition they consecrate all their Fancies, and make as many Mysteries of them. In short, I might venture to affirm, that the Fable of *Simon the Magician's* flying in the Air, carry'd by Devils, and struck down by St. Peter, is no more than a mere Allegory of St. Peter's Victory over *Simon*, when disputing together concerning the Unity of God, the Apostle put that Heretick to silence, as the Author of the *Constitutions* speaks, *Lib. 6. c. 8.* That pompous Description signifying nothing more, than that the Evangelical Simplicity concerning the Unity of God, prevail'd and triumph'd over the too swelling Philosophy of *Simon*, who held divers Persons in one God.

But to proceed: Another fam'd Doctrine of Antiquity is that of the Pre-

existence of Souls. Somebody explaining those Words of *Moses*, that the Sons of *God* came in unto the Daughters of *Men*, turn'd that Text into an Allegory, and interpreted it of Souls delighting in being united to Human Bodies. But because he, expressing himself theologically, called the Sons of *God Angels*, that Word deceived many *Platonist* Fathers, who took it literally. And thence came that so absurd, yet at the same time so generally receiv'd Opinion, that the Angels had Commerce with Women, and that from those monstrous Copulations proceeded Giants. *Origen* in his 50th Book against *Celsus*, teacheth us the Mystery of that Allegorical Copulation. "Some body," says he, (meaning *Philo de Gigant.*) has apply'd that Text of *Moses* to incorporeal Souls, which he metaphorically calls the Daughters of *Men*. It may be the other Fathers were not ignorant of this spiritual Sense, but they follow'd their manner of philosophizing, which was to speak always in such terms as kept the Allegory conceal'd, in order to give the more mysterious Air to what they said. They always suppos'd, that the Wits of the first rank, for whom they wrote, knew the Secret of it; and as to the Vulgar, their aim was to conceal it from them.

After what has been said, how shall we know but that they affected the giving an appearance of a real and literal Doctrine to all they have deliver'd to us concerning the *Word*? And whether they have not designedly conceal'd from us the Secret of the Allegory, that they might by that majestic Outline draw the more admiration and respect from the common People, who love what's wondrous. The Distinctions which *Origen* so often makes between intelligible, and sensible, between Contemplation and Faith, between the *Word-God*, which is the Object of eraphick Minds, and the incarnate and crucified *Word*, the Object of vulgar Minds; I say, these Distinctions, and some others of like nature, scarce leave room to

doubt of it. And indeed he may be confident of it, who considers what the same Origen says (*ubi supra.*) " By the second God, says he, *διπτερον Θεού,* we mean no other than a Power which comprehends all other Powers; a Word, or Reason, which contains all other Reasons: and we say that that Reason is particularly united to the Soul of Jesus Christ, because that only is capable of receiving the Word it self, Wisdom it self, Justice it self (*αυτρος άγα, αυτροποιας, &c.*) And elsewhere he teaches us, " That the Word was joyn'd to the Soul of Jesus Christ, even before the Incarnation, that Soul having merited to be joyn'd to it" (*ibid. l. 4.*) That so that Soul, or that Word (for he uses those two Words indifferently) did, for our sakes, descend on Earth, there to suffer Death for us Mortals. Again (*Comment. in Joan. Tom. 20.*) " That this Soul, which was before in God in its Perfection and Fulness, was by God sent into the Womb of Mary, there to take a Body; other less perfect Souls not having had the same Honour. If to this be added his affirming in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Tome on the same Gospel, " That 'tis only the uttered Word, which according to him can be no other than the Soul of Jesus Christ; " That, I say, only this Word, and not the Word-God was incarnate; it cannot be doubted but that by this Soul sent, descended and incarnate, he means the same thing which he and others say, when they speak of a Word sent, descended and incarnate. And what can this Reason be which it merited, and which was united to it? When the Veil of Allegory is taken off, it can be no other than that high Contemplation, whereof the Soul of Jesus Christ had by its pre-existent Obedience render'd it self capable; or than that degree of Prophecy, and that Spirit without measure, wherewith God had honoured it, and which made it Partaker of the Divine Nature; or lastly, the

very Office of Word or of Interpreter of God, whereof God had judged it worthy, as the most perfect and noblest of the Spirits, which he had decreed to declare his Mind. " *Celsus,* says he, (*ibid. lib. 7.*) will not own that he who suffer'd Death can be worthy of the second Honours next to the Supreme God, as well because of the Powers he had acquir'd in Heaven, as because of those he had acquir'd on Earth. Supposing, as you see, that Jesus Christ had merited in Heaven before he came to merit on our Earth, he was very far from believing him to be the most High God.

Wherefore, Origen having said of the Word, that it was in God, that it came from God, that it was made Flesh; and affirming the same of the Soul of J. C. this Conformity yields just reason to suspect, that the Doctrine of the Word is nothing but the Soul of Jesus Christ theologiz'd, whereon they discoun'd Allegorically. That's in a manner prov'd by the Hypothesis of the Arians, who believ'd that the Word was to Jesus Christ instead of a Soul; and consequently by the Word understanding only the Soul of Jesus Christ created before all Ages: An Hypothesis renew'd in our time by John Turner, who has given it a new turn; for he maintains, " That the Word is nothing else but the Soul of Jesus Christ, created indeed, but eternally united to the Substance of God, and by that Union participating all his Perfections. *A Discourse concerning the Messiah,* Ep. Dedic. p. 154.

The same is infer'd from the Use which has been made of some Texts of Scripture; as, for example, these: *I came from the Father. O Father, glorify me with the Glory which I had with thee, &c. Who being in the Form of God, &c.* Our Divines interpret them of the Pre-existence of the Word; but Origen, and Dr. Rust, in his Book intitul'd, *Origen and his chief Opinions,* interpret them of the Pre-existence of the Soul of Jesus Christ. Whence comes this Confusion of Ideas? The reason of it is easily given: The former

former of these Interpretations is mysterious and allegorical, and the latter literal. So we may conclude that the Fathers allegoriz'd on the pre-existent Soul of *Jesus Christ*, loving our Nature, and becoming incarnate for our Salvation; which they in their allegorical Stile, call'd the Word, or the Son of God. And consequently, those who take this last Allegory in the literal Sense, and understand it of a Divine Person united to our Flesh, are not less ridiculous than they who, stumbling at the Letter of the first Allegory, really believ'd that Angels had mix'd themselves with mortal Women. The Text for the first Hypothesis, that the Sons of God were married to the Daughters of Men, serves as well as that for the second. I have, begotten thee before the Morning, at *Matt. 25. 6*. and *John 3. 13*.

This Pre-existence of Souls, and particularly of that of *Jesus Christ*, has been very prevalent in the Church. We find it plainly enough express'd in the second Article attributed to *Clement Romanus*, Cratobulus, &c. As you have been call'd dwelling in the Flesh, so you will come in the Flesh of *Jesus Christ*, the Lord, who said us, being the first Spirit. *John 1. 33*. Was made Flesh, and so called us likewise we shall receiv'e the Recompence in the Flesh. This Passage supposeth the Pre-existence of our Souls, as well as that of the Soul of *Jesus Christ*. For he compares our Spirits existing in the Flesh to that first Spirit which was made Flesh to call us. He calls *Jesus Christ* the first of all Spirits, whether Souls or Angels, because God beget him first a little before he undertook the Creation of the World, and afterwards employ'd him to create the other Spirits, according to the Doctrine of *Lactantius*. (*Instit. lib. 4. c. 15*) who further teaches us (*ibid. c. 16*) That this Holy Spirit descending from Heaven, chose the Womb of a Virgin to enter into. And the better to carry on the Comparison which he makes of that Spirit to

all incarnate Spirits, he shews that he was call'd to the Recompence only by his faithful Obedience and Virtue (*ibid. cap. 14*). His Words are remarkable; "God," says he, "having sent his Son to Men — He hath shewn his Faithfulness in teaching, that there is but one God, and that he only is to be worship'd: and he never call'd himself God, because he would have violated his Truth, if being sent to take away from the World the Plurality of Gods, and to establish the Unity of God, he had introduc'd more than one God. That had not been preaching One God, nor working for the interest of him who sent him, but for his own: and it would have been sounding himself from the Father, whom he came to glorify. Then by his having been thus faithful, and in the Design of discharging his Commission, not intruding anything to himself, he has received the Dignity of everlasting King, the Honour of Supreme King, the Power of judging, and the Name of God. By the way, these Words of this Father are a curious Paraphrase on those of *St. Paul*, *Phil. 2. 6*; *See Wherby* in the form of God, did not count it robbery, &c. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a Name which is above every Name, &c."

Let us here remember a distinction of the Fathers, which has been mention'd already, and wherein the Footsteps of ancient Allegory visibly appear. The Fathers distinguish'd two kinds of Generation of the Word, the one eternal and internal, and the other external, which began with the World, and the only one which they properly call Generation. Dr. *Bull* acknowledgeth this distinction, only he pretends (but without reason) that the latter which is metaphorical. Granting this his desire, is the same thing with respect to the Question now treated of. For it rehalts nevertheless

true, that they allegoriz'd on one of the Generations of the Word, be it which it will; and that's all I need. Let them say as long as they please, say that the Fathers spoke of a Generation of the Word, which was proper and literal: I shall answer, Yes, and that's what I call gross Platonism, which has made them philosophicalize so absurdly. But by their own confession, the same Fathers have spoken of another Generation of the Word, which is metaphysical and allegorical, and that's what I call their refin'd Platonism, the fair Remains of sound Philosophy; which betrays them, and manifestly discovers the absurdity of the other part of their System, whereon they have innovated.

He must know little of Plato, who can believe that he could fall into so dull a Philosophy, as that God did from all Eternity necessarily beget a Son, a second God, putting him forth out of himself, with his proper Hypostasis, which distinguishes him from the Father; and that he made use of him to create the World; unless were perhaps to deceive the vulgar People. But that God did voluntarily conceive a Design of creating the World; that he did actually create it by his efficacious Word; that that Word is his Son, in an allegorical Sense, because it was emanated from the Divine Understanding; that it was in an allegorical sense the Creator, because it was the Means and Instrument which the Wisdom of God made use of to give Life and Being to all things: Then indeed I own heretofore Moses laying, that God speaks, and the Creature obey'd: then I shall own Plato's Allegory telling me the same thing with Moses, but in the Stile of the Religion wherein he was born: Then, to conclude, I own the good Divinity of Clemens Alexandrinus, who assures me, that the Word of the Father is not that which was begotten, but supreme Goodness, profound Wisdom, and infinite Power manifesting it self in the Work of this Universe. This is, without doubt, the

true way of understanding Plato, and we have a famous Platonist as our Witness for it; his *Catius Rhodogonus* (*Lib. Antiq. libro 9. cap. 12.*) For that Great Man very judiciously observes, that one can never be a good Platonist, if he do not reckon that Plato is to be understood allegorically.

Good Platonists, like the Author of the *Recognitions*, discover to us the Origin of this allegorical Philosophy, by laying, "That from the first Will proceeded another Will, and from this the World, (*Lib. 1. c. 24.*) That is to say, that from the first eternal and internally begotten Will, proceeded at the beginning of all things, a second Will externally begotten, an express Command, which Spoken, all things were made. And this second Will is metaphorically the Son, because proceeding from God himself, and from the Invisibility which is proper to his Nature, it is a kind of Generation producing his Image; every Manifestation being the Image of God. Ireneus also Tanoher of the good Platonists who allegoriz'd. In many places of his Treatise against Heretics, he supposes God not to have needed any more than his two Hands, to create the World. There's no difficulty in psyching his intention thro' those Words. Whereas the Heretics maintain'd that all was made by Angels, and that those Spirits had created the World: Ireneus in opposing that Doctrine, flies into the opposite extreme, viz. That God, who had no need of Angels, made use of no more than his two Hands, his Word, and his Spirit, to do all things; not that by those two Powers he understood two Hypostases, but only personalliz'd them in opposition to the *Æons*, or to the *Gnosticks* Angels, which were esteemed Persons. And he meant nothing more than that God needed not any other than himself (as he explains himself in the 19th Chapter of his first Book) and in no wise any Power separate from him, having an Hypostasis distinct

distinct from his: This God, says he, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What do these words signify, That God needed no other than himself, if not that God had no need of any more than his Command and Power to operate what he will'd? Now this Command and this Power are not two *Hypostases* separate and distinct from his (which was the Opinion of those Heretics) but two Powers, which he employ'd as his two Hands: Either let's blind our selves, or see Allegory in all this. Again, it's by a common Figure, that the Name, the Qualities, and even the Personality of the thing which teacheth to be, or which is rejected, is given to that which takes its place, tho' it be of a different nature: God rejecting Sacrifices, gives the name of Sacrifice to the Obedience which he accepts. There is nothing more natural (says Dr. *An* in his Manuscript concerning the Sacerdotal faction) than to give to a thing which supplies the place of another, and which procures all the fruits of it; the Name of that instead whereof it is substituted. St. Paul observ'd this Rule in his Epistle to the Hebrews: If he gave the Name of Sacrifice to the Obedience of Jesus Christ, it was to sue his Expressions to the Ideas which prevail'd under the ancient Dispensation, wherein the principal Acts of Piety consisted in Sacrifices; he applied those ancient Sacrifices to the Death of Jesus Christ, without intending any other Mystery in it.

Whereto may be added, that Jesus Christ speaking of the Holy Ghost, who was to teach the Truth by his Inspirations, as he himself had taught it by Preaching, speaks of him as of a Teacher, as of a Person, because he was to supply the absence of a Teacher, and fill the place of a Person. So, as the Gnosticks spake of nothing but Angels who had created the World, and govern'd the antient People, and of Emanations and Generations from the Supreme Being:

*Irenaeus* answers, The true Angels which created the World, and taught the Prophets, are the Word of God and his Spirit; and that Word and Spirit are his true Emanations: So making of a Manifestation and of a Communication, God's Helpers, his Coadjutors in the Creation, his Ministers in the Government of the World; making, I say, so many Hypostases of the Godhead, of those Powers, because he substitutes them in lieu of the Hypostases rejected by him.

It is by the same method that *Theophilus* of Antioch made his *strictly allegorical Commentary* on the four Gospels. Thus he allegorizes the first word of St. John: "The Beginning," says he, "that is God: The Word, that is, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, of whom the Voice of the Father saith in the Psalm, My Heart hath uttered a good Word, that is, (to say Christ,) by whom all things were made: And without him nothing was made; Nothing, that is to say, an Idol, which, as the Apostle saith, is nothing in the World. It is apparent by the Method of this Author, who designs the explaining the Gospels allegorically, and particularly by the allegorical Explanation he gives of the word Beginning, and of that of Nothing, that what he says of the Word is likewise allegorical. The Word, says he, is the Son of God; that is to say, the Christ, by whom all things were made. Is not that saying that it is the Christ, the Man whom God hath anointed, who is the Son and the Word, by whose Power all under the Gospel was made? even the Idol, which was made without him, having been destroy'd, and the World reform'd. Let us deal plainly, Christ is the Word only by virtue of an allegorical Sense, which considers him as a second Word, in as much as he is with respect to the spiritual World, what the Word-God was with respect to the sensible World.

It seems this allegorical Exposition of the Word of St. John, was not unknown

in the time of Hypolitus: *(Hypolit. de Deo trino, & uno, contra Nocturno.)* For he raises an Objection to himself, which shews, that it was urg'd against the Platynizers. " But, says that Father Ignatius, " will say to me, You introduce Israel into " your Sies, when you call the Word *Son*? " Sir, John indeed speaks of a *Word*, but if " he understands it otherwise, and by " Allegory. Hypolitus does not wholly reject this Exposition, and afterwards answers, " That, in truth, the *Word* " was called *Son* from the beginning, " only because it was afterwards to take " birth, and become a *Son*; the *Word* of " it self, and without Flesh, not being " a perfect *Son*. Which shews, that according to him, the *Word* was nothing else but a Divine Operation, which was the *Son* but *improperly*, and by an *imperfect Generation*, before it was *united* to the *Flesh* of Christ. One would think Servetus had copied Hypolitus, *(ibid. p. 90.)* " Let us, says he, exactly follow the Scripture-Style, let us say the *Word* where that says the *Word*, and the *Son* where that says the *Son*. For " merely the *Word*, now the *Son*. " That is, the *Word* was formerly *the Son*; " it is only because it had the *Form*, and " was the *Seed* of the *Son* which was to " come. — And will then say, says he " in another place, the *Prolation* of the *Word*, and the *Generation* of the *Son*.

One of our Bishops does not seem to dislike the foregoing, in the word *Son*, with respect to the *Son of Mary*, rather than with respect to the *Begetter-Word*. Thus he speaks. *(ad Discourse to the Clergy, p. 99.)* " Many have thought that the " Term *Son* did not belong to the *Blessed* " Three, but only to our Saviour, as he " was the *Messiah*; the Jews having had " that Notion of the *Messiah*, that as he " was to be the King of *Israel*, so he " was to be the *Son of God*. — Now some Critics do apprehend, that " since in many places the term *Son of God*, has manifestly a relation to Christ, " as the *Messiah*; there is in this an

" Uniformity in the whole Scripture. " Still, so that every where by the *Scripture* " Son of God, we are to understand " Jesus as the *Messiah*. — But that " the Divine Principle that was in him, " in the strictness of Speech to be called, as *Sir John* does, the *Word*? So that by this, if true, all the Speculations concerning an *Eternal Generation*, are cut off in the strict sense of the " Words; tho in a larger Sense every " Emanation, of what sort ever, may " be so call'd.

Whence appears how vain Dr. Bull's Endeavours are (*Judic. Ecclesi.*) to prove that the four sorts of *Generation* alledged by the *Socinians* to fill the Signification of the Term *Son of God*, are not sufficient. The constant Phraseology of the New Testament ruins his Pretence; while not one of those Expressions, *Son of God*, is applicable to an *Eternal Generation*. And that also shews, that the Term *Abi* or *Abba*, cannot be otherwise refer'd than to that Divine Operation which over-shadowed the *Blessed Virgin*, and to that effusion of the *Holy Ghost*, which consecrated Jesus, *Christ*, in his Office of *Messiah*. And this powerful Virtue can be no other than an *allegorical Son*, as it is a *Divine Emanation* and every *Emanation* an improper and figurative *Generation*. It's to little purpose that Dr. Bull, with the *Mahometans*, objects to us, " That in Christ's " being born of a *Virgin*, or ascended " into Heaven, there is nothing which " distinguishes him from the first Man, " who was made by the Hand of God, " nor from *Enoch* who was taken up into " Heaven. We answer with Bartholomew of Edessa (*Contra Agren.*) " What " a pitiful Argument that is! If *Adam*, " may be compar'd to *Adam Christ*, " because he was made by God's own " hand, without Man's operation, it " will thence follow that the first *Adam*, " and the first *Christ* may be compar'd " to *Adam* and to *Christ*; and that they " are not of a less excellent nature, be- " cause they were immediately created

" as well as *Adam* and *J.C.* This Author gives us to understand, that what distinguishes *Adam* from other Animals, or *J. Christ* from *Adam* himself, is not so much the Miracle of their Birth, which seems to be every way equal, as the excellency of those Gifts, which they more or less receiv'd by that extraordinary Birth: And those degrees of Excellence are shewn by the Breath of God in *Adam's* Nostrils, and by the Operation of the *Holy Ghost* in the Conception of *Jesus Christ*: That Divine Breath raising *Adam* above all other Animals; and the *Holy Ghost* being doubtless something more noble than that *Breath*, hath raised *Jesus Christ* above the first Man, and made him the *Son of God* in a more proper and more peculiar manner. So we are likewise to argue on the Exaltation of *Jesus Christ*, and shew that it raises him infinitely above *Enoch*, not by the mere Miracle of raising him to Heaven, but by the Sovereign Power which was then communicated to him.

What shall we say of *Origen*? We might copy his whole Works. Read only his first *Tome* on *St. John*, where he strongly disputes against the *Valentinians*, 1. In shewing them, that since they expound the other Names given to our Saviour, as the *Life*, the *Truth*, and the *Light*, &c. *anagogically* and *allegorically* (they are his own Terms) it is but reasonable that they keep to the same Rule in interpreting the Name of *Word*, and give it an allegorical and figurative Sense. " 'Tis not reasonable, says he to them, " that you will not expound the Term " *Word* in a metaphorical Sense, while " you allegorically explain that other " phrase, *the Light of the World*. — " Therefore since *Jesus Christ* is call'd " the *Light*, because of his Work or " Office, which is to enlighten the " *World*, it follows that he is also call'd " the *Word*, because of his *Work*, which " is to cure us of our Errors and Fol- " lies, to prepare us to act conformably " to *Truth* and *Reason*. Nothing can be

more just than this Observation of *Origen*. St. John's Stile is altogether Oriental, full of harsh Metaphors, hyperbolical Expressions, and very peculiar manners of speaking. 'Tis however impossible for one freed from Prejudices to mistake them. How? Why, every Man whose Head's not fill'd with mad *Platonism*, will not look for more Mystery in the Term *Word*, than in those of *Light*, *Way*, *Life* and *Truth*, &c. Titles which the Evangelist no less attributes to *Jesus Christ* than the former. Indeed if this Divine Saviour is the *Light* and the *Truth*, because he is the bearer of a Doctrine which dissipates our Darknes and Errors; if he is the *Way* and the *Life*, because he opens to us the way of attaining everlasting Happiness: why may we not argue in the same manner on this other Term *Word*? And why should we not say that *J. Christ* is so called, because he is the Bearer of the Word of God by way of Excellence, and the Interpreter of his most authentick Truths?

2. *Origen* endeavours to take from the *Valentinians* two Passages in the 33d and 45th Psalms, which they made use of to prove that the term *Word* had no other Signification than that of *Prolation*, properly so called. For he supposes that these Words, *My Heart bath utter'd a good Word*, do not signify such a *Prolation*, a proper and literal Generation, but a *metaphorical Prolation*: and that from this reason, that the word *Heart* in this Text being figurative, the term *Word* must also be figurative. And that we may the better apprehend how far *Origen* carries the Figure of this *Word*, the other Text which he quotes from the *Psalms*, so fully clears the matter, as to leave no room for cavilling. " The *Valentinians*, says he, believe that these " Words, *The Heavens were created by* " the *Word of God*, and by the *Spirit of* " his *Mouth*, were said of our *Saviour* " and of the *Holy Ghost*; tho' it be cer- " tain that one may give them this other " Sense, That the *Heavens* were esta- " blish'd.

" blis'h'd by Divine Reason and Wisdom (*ratione Dei*) as we say that a House " was built by that Skill which is the " Art of building Houses. I leave the Reader to judg whether an Unitarian could more plainly remove all the Idea of *Hypostasis* from our Minds. Therefore when the same *Origen* does elsewhere argue concerning the *Word*, as if he himself believ'd it an *Hypostasis*, his so speaking was according to the Principles of the Greek Philosophy. For, as *Porphyry* rightly observes, *Origen* having continually apply'd himself to reading the Writings of the *Platonists* and the *Pythagoreans*, and having therein learnt the allegorical way of those Philosophers expounding the Mysteries of the Greeks, made use of it himself in his Interpretation of the Scriptures (*apud Euseb. l. 6. c. 19.*) See likewise *Bibl. univ. T. 6. p. 50.* That declared Enemy of the Christian Religion is not the only Person who has given that judgment of *Origen*: Mr. *Huet* does not treat him more favourably in his *Origeniana*, l. 2. c. 2. " *Origen*, says he, was " one of *Plato's* greatest Admirers, in- " somuch, that instead of fusing the " *Platonick* Tenents to the Christian " Doctrine, he regulated the Doctrine " of Christianity by the Dogma of the " *Platonists*. And a little lower he adds, " That *Origen* had been carry'd to " those Excesses by the example of his " Preceptor *Clemens Alexand.* who us'd " to embellish the Religion of *Jesus* " *Christ* with the Academick Paint.

Can any one think that *Justin* did not discourse by the Principles of this *Allegorical* Philosophy, when in his second Apology he calls the Reason which is in Man, a Part and Seed, *μέρος καὶ σπέρματος*, of the Divine Word? The Divine Word is in his sense, only that universal Reason, that Source and Fulness of Wisdom which resides in the Divine Understanding, whereof ours is a Stream and a part. Is our Reason an Hypostasis distinct from Man? How shall we then imagine that this Father ever intended to say that

Divine Reason is an *Hypostasis* distinct from God? I may very well say that my Reason has taught me such a thing, and that I consulted my Reason, without supposing my Reason to be any other Person than my self. Then why may we not say God made use of his Reason to create this Universe, that his Reason was his Counsellor and his Minister, without making a second Person of his Reason? Certainly my Reason cannot be personaliz'd, any otherwise than by the Power of Allegory, neither can that of God be any otherwife. Nay, it may be that *Justin* strain'd his Allegory yet farther; and that he intended to say, that Reason, or the universal Seed, is no other than the Gospel; which is not a part of the Seed, as the Precepts of Reason which enlighten'd the Philosophers are, but the fulness of that incorruptible Seed which regenerates the Heart.

I will produce another Example of this allegorical way of interpreting the Scripture. St. *Cyprian* explaining that famous Passage of St. *John* (1 Ep. 5. 8.) concerning the three Witnesses on Earth, the *Spirit*, the *Water*, and the *Blood*, has spoken of them, as of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, which are the three Witnesses in Heaven, now found in our Bibles, but were not there in the days of that Father. Some, as *Fulgentius*, having confounded St. *Cyprian's* Discourse with the Sacred Text, did not doubt but that Holy Martyr had spoken literally, and as words of the Scripture, what he said only in Allegory; not observing, that what he asserted of the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, is a spiritual Sense which he had drawn from the Three Witnesses on Earth; as if the *Spirit* were the *Father*, the *Blood* the *Son*, and the *Water* the *Holy Ghost*. But *Facundus* did not suffer himself to be at all deceiv'd by it, for he informs us (*Defens. Trinit. Capit. l. 1. c. 3.*) " That " St. *Cyprian* will have that to be under- " stood of the *Father*, the *Son*, and " the

" the *Holy Ghost*, which St. John said of " the *Spirit, Water and Blood*; which can be only an allegorical Interpretation. And that Allegory was followed by St. *Augustin* (*contra Maxim.* lib. 3. c. 12.) where he exprestly says, " That the *Spirit*, the *Water* and the *Blood*, are the " *Sacrament* of the *Father*, the *Son*, and " the *Holy Ghost*. What's the meaning of the *Sacrament*? if it be not the *Mystery* and *Allegory*. Now, I pray, who can warrant me that the Fathers, who so strained the Allegory on the three *Witnesses* on Earth, to find in it the *Trinity* therein, have not also strained it on the *Word* of St. John, to find in it their Favourite Doctrine, *Plato's second God*? If they misapplyed these Words, *My Heart hath uttered a Good Word*, and these *I have begotten them in my Bosom before Aurora*; how can I be assur'd that they have not deceived me, or that their Infatuation for *Plato*, has not deceived themselves, when they Platonically interpret those other Places, where it is said, *That the Word was God*, and *that the Word was made Flesh*?

However that be, it must be granted me, That the Fathers made no difficulty of seeking sublime senses in the Scriptures, and of raising themselves up very high above its plain and natural meaning. That appears by the use St. *Cyprian* and St. *Augustin* made of the Epistle General of St. John. Now the same Fathers having expressed their Allegories in too absolute Terms, without characterizing them by some Mark, whereby they might be distinguished from a proper and literal sense, it has in succeeding time hapened that the literal sense of what they said has been followed. We have seen it in the Example of St. *Cyprian*, that Father expressing himself absolutely : " It is written, says he, of the *Father*, " of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, " *And these three are one*. Now that was written only of the *Spirit*, the *Water* and the *Blood*. Then the Allegorical Exposition has been taken for an ex-

press Text of Scripture. I strongly suspect that the same thing has happen'd to that noted Text of St. Paul (*1 Tim. c. 3. v. 16.*) *The Mystery of Godliness is great, God manifested in the Flesh*. It's well known, that the Latin Church has always read, which was manifested in the Flesh. We may be well assur'd, that the whole Greek Church did not read otherwise, by *Gelazius* of *Cizicus*'s putting this Reading into the Mouths of the Fathers of the *Nicene Council*. He says, that *Macarius* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, answering the Argument of a Philosopher, cited this Passage of St. Paul. But how? In the same manner as we read it in the *Vulgar Latin*, *The Mystery of Godliness is great, which was manifested in the Flesh* (ο επαργεσθη) But that Father not fully satisfied with the Letter of the Text, added this Gloss, that is to say, *The Son of God*, a perfectly Spiritual Exposition, which being since slid into the Text, gave birth to our present Reading, *God manifested in the Flesh*. And here an Allegorical Exposition is again taken for an express Text of Scripture.

It is the same with the *Word*: some one having allegorized, according to the Custom of that time, on the Words of *Moses*, *And God said*, or on those of the Psalmist, *My Heart hath uttered a good Word*, or on those of St. John, *In the beginning was the Word*, &c. and having expressed his Allegory in too absolute Terms, there needed no more to Men prepossess'd with false Platonism, to make them regard such an allegorical Exposition as the Doctrine of the Church. The same thing that happen'd among the Hereticks, has also fallen out among those who call themselves Orthodox. And we need not wonder that the same *Platonism*, which both the one and the other made profession of, cast them both into the same Wandrings. This is what I mean, and my Conjecture comes near to Demonstration. We have seen that *Valentine* a great Sectary of *Plato*, having

allegoriz'd on Divine Ideas and Dispensations, and having spoken of them under the Fiction of as many Persons, his Disciples not understanding his Allegory, made Personal Substances of those feign'd Persons. If Valentine's Followers misunderstood the sense of their Master, can we doubt but that the same thing happened to the *Platonic* Fathers, in their misapprehending the allegorical way of philosophizing used by their Predecessors, and in converting mere Divine Manifestations into Personal Substances? For my part I do not at all doubt of their having imitated each other. The Doctors of both sides had at the same time the same Ideas, viz. the Principles of refin'd *Platonism*, delighting in Allegory and the Fiction of Persons: And the Disciples of each Party at the same time chang'd their Masters Ideas, and fell into gross *Platonism*, which finds *Hypotheses* in every thing. Whatever Party Men happened to be engag'd in, they rarely miss following the then prevailing Philosophy, and putting themselves to the Humour and Genius of that Age. When Allegory was in vogue, all as well Orthodox as Hereticks allegoriz'd, each with reference

to his own System, some under the Fiction of *Three Aëons*, and others under that of Thirty. So also when gross *Platonism* had prevailed, all delighted in *Hypotheses*, and follow'd the Philosophy in fash on. 'Tis the Fate of *Hypotheses*, the Humour of the Age regulates them. Thus refined *Platonism* degenerated into gross *Platonism*, and allegorical Expositions into a gross literal Sense. It often happens, that Disciples much misunderstand their Masters, or go further than they to say something new. But, to conclude, which way forever Innovation begins, it passes in very little time from Sect to Sect; Heathens, Hereticks, Orthodox, all embrace the new Method. Their Doctrines are different; but their manner of philosophizing on those Doctrines is alike and uniform. Perhaps they may not agree in the Nature of what they call Principles, nor in their Names, Number or Order, nor on their Age or Excellence, nor in their other Qualities and Prerogatives: but however it be with these, they shall all agree that they are *Hypotheses*, *Personal Substances*, because the Philosophy of the Age requires it.

## C H A P. XIX.

*A Digression concerning the pretended unalterable Faith of the Church.*

TIS pretended that the Church is so faithful a Guardian of the *Tradition*, that it cannot be liable to these sorts of Changes. But one must have a flender Acquaintance with Antiquity, and less Experience of what happens every day, to deceive ones self with so wretched an Answer. The Church is jealous of certain Terms, and she is a faithful Repository; that's agreed. But

provided one does not meddle with the Terms, which she holds sacred and inviolable; one may change the Hypotheses as much as one pleases, and they have been changed with Impunity, and without giving much Trouble to the Church. Dr. Wallis and Dr. Sherlock hold two Hypotheses, directly opposite to one another; for the first urges so strongly the Unity of God, that he loses the Trinity of

of Persons; and the latter willing to maintain the Trinity, has quite lost the Unity. One of these two, no matter which, has changed the Tradition. Let the Church speak therefore, and declare herself if she can, for one of these Hypotheses. Let her condemn and anathematize the other; let her chaste the Authors of it, and cast them out of her Bosom. No, she will not do it, she is not concerned whether a false Hypothesis may lead her, provided it does not change her Terms which are Sacred, and her Favourites. For instance, suppose that it has always been believed hitherto, that three Persons signify but three Modes, or three Relations, or three Differences, &c. You may say notwithstanding, without fearing the good Master will formally declare himself, that three Persons are no less than three Spirits and three Beings; provided you retain the Terms, she uses in her Prayers and say devoutly with her, O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have Mercy upon us miserable Sinners. The Reason is plainly this, she is very quick at hearing, if you pronounce these Words, one God and three Persons. But with what Modesty will she judge of the sense of those Terms, having no certain Idea for 'em? If instead of three Persons I say four or five, the Church will declare me an Heretick, this is all she can do. In short, whether these three Persons are three Modes or three distinct Substances, this is a Theology, too nice and curious for the Church's Decision; and as to this, she leaves all her Children to their Liberty of believing as they can. The Church has been always the same without doubt; she might condemn as Hereticks, those who reckoned thirty Persons or thirty Sons in the Divine Essence, as the Gnosticks did: But for others, who did but change three signified and allegorical Persons, into three personal Substances; she has let them alone, or rather she has allowed them as her dear Children, to ac-

commodate and sue her to the prevailing Philosophy, the better to draw into her Communion the grossest Platonists, who made a great Figure in the Schools.

Isaac Vossius in his second Letter to Rivet goes farther, and ventures to say, that the Church made no difficulty even of tolerating the Valentinians, that is, the Doctrine of them, who held thirty Persons in the Deity, and that she admitted them into her Communion. She had more Indulgence than I should have: "The first Christians, says Vossius, did not presently cast Heretics out of her Communion, they came not to that Extremity; but did it when the Heretics went so far, as expressly to contradict the Christian Faith. As to others, who did but alter the Truths of the Gospel, by mixing with them the Gentile Fables, they dealt not so rigorously with them, but allow'd them some kind of Liberty. He puts down Valentinians among these last; whence it follows, that if the thirty Sons of that Heretic were tolerated, there would have been no difficulty to admit of three Hypotheses, instead of three Attributes or three Modes. These good Men thought it not amiss, to accommodate the Truths of the Gospel with the Fables of the Pagan Philosophers and Poets, but rather a Service to Religion. Hence it was, without doubt, that Platonism, which at first served her only for Ornament, at length became, under favour of this Toleration, the very Support of her Mysteries.

This brings to my remembrance a Remark of Mons. Le Clerc in his Rules of Criticism (Biblioth. Univ. Tom. 10. p. 234.) which very well deserves our Reflection. "It has so fallen out, that tho' there have been always in use among Christians some certain Terms, yet they have insensibly departed widely from their Ideas, which they who first used the Terms fixed to them: and tho' the Words remain the same, yet the Sense of them has passed

" passed thro divers Revolutions. The  
" phrases or Expressions being, says he,  
" written in sensible Characters in a  
" great many Books, could not suffer  
" any great Alteration : but the Ideas  
" (first belonging to those Expressions)  
" being things not to be seen with ones  
" Eyes ; and their Rise and Disappear-  
" ance, and their several Changes, being  
" all secret things within the Mind of  
" every Man, and invisible to every  
" body else ; 'tis hard to guess what  
" has happened, by the means of equi-  
" vocal Sounds. One sees on a Theater  
" the Actors come forth from behind the  
" Curtains, in certain Habits ; may one  
" therefore conclude, that always when  
" one sees the same Habits, they are the  
" same Actors who have them on ? Tis  
" the same with Thoughts, and  
" Words wherein they are dressed. In  
these Words you have an account  
as it were, of the Comedy our *Trinitarian*  
acted at this day. They put on all  
the Dresses of the Church, and lay with  
her, *Holy Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, three  
Persons and one God*. But does it follow  
therefore, that under the same Words  
they conceive the same Ideas, or that  
they are the same Actors always, when  
seen, in the same Habits ? Now as also  
Some are *Sabellians*, others are *Rigid*,  
and others are *moderate Trinitarians*, and  
all together have Ideas for confus'd, and  
contrary to one another ; that it maybe  
one should not be much mistaken, if  
one said that this Expression, [three Persons]  
in their Mouths has, as many sens's  
as there are Divines who pronounce them, if  
it be true that they fix any meaning  
to them, and that they form any Ideas  
about them. So that, altho' the *Blaug  
nists* and the *Christians* have used these  
Terms, yet it does not follow therefore, that  
they had the same Ideas, nor that the  
*Platonists* had the same among themselves ; nor  
that all Christians among themselves, in all Times and Places, affix'd  
to the same Terms, one constant, uniform  
Signification. The present Time

sufficiently shew's us what one ought to  
judge of the past. The Terms, have been  
always the same, but they are only sensible  
Objects that are not liable to change ;  
but the Meaning and the Ideas being  
things invisible, which pass within the  
Mind, they may be, and are changed  
without being perceived. To conclude,  
I make this Reflection only, with regard  
to metaphysical Terms, whereof we have  
but unsteady and confus'd Ideas, and  
by consequence they are liable to very  
great Alterations. As these Ideas do  
not enter into our Minds without difficulty,  
so they are not maintained there  
with a little Pains ; sooner or later they  
vanish, and after all, they cannot pass  
from the Master's Mouth to the Scholar's  
Ear without some Revolutions : The Uni-  
ty of God is one thing with a Jew, and  
another with the *Trinitarian*. The Term  
[Confusibstantial] with the *Samosatenians*  
carries a different Idea with it in the  
Mind, from that of the *Nicene Fathers*.  
Three Hypostases have one sense with the  
*Platonists*, and another with the *Athana-  
sians*, one with the Followers of *Arius*,  
and another among *Us*.

And certainly the Fathers of the *Council  
of Alexandria*, had reason to give this  
Advice to them at Antioch, in the Letter  
they writ to them (apud Athan. vid. Dru-  
pin. Tom. 2. p. 1225) " That they  
should not differ among themselves  
about the Hypostases, since they who  
owned three in the Trinity, and they  
who allowed of no more than one,  
had both of the same Opinion, and  
differed only in the manner of their  
Expression. We understand well en-  
ough what this means, the metaphysical  
Terms are capable of the most con-  
tradictory sens's, one may make them  
as we make the Clock, strike what we  
please. If you own three Hypostases,  
you are Orthodox ; if you acknowledge  
but one, you are still so nevertheless.  
This Term is a sort of *Pseude*, that  
takes in all sens's. In some men's mouths  
it signifies the manner of subsisting, and  
in others

then 'tis three; with others it signifies Substance, and then 'tis but one. You see, here both are found to be of the same mind, before they are aware. Alas! I really think that I and the Church shall be of the same mind too, if when she owns one Essence and three Persons, I should say, on the contrary, one Person and three Essences; we mean the same thing it may be. We express our selves indeed differently, but after all we shall agree at the bottom; twill always be three substances in one I know, not what, nor that's all that the Terms (Essence and Persons) signify in the Mouths of Separatists. But Ratiocinately apart, who would not pity St. Jerome, who suffer'd so much pain? (*ibid. ad Damascum*, 59.) enquire whether he should lay one Hypothesis or three Hypotheses? What! Learned Doctor, must the Pope be confounded above this? Say what you please, for you will find a very safe Conscience. St. Austin much better understood the sense of his Party, as to the Word Person (*de Trinitate lib. 5. cap. 9.*) "When," says he, "tis asked what the Three are, human Language is soanry, and affords not Terms to express it; 'tis therefore answer'd, three Persons, not as if that was some what to the purpose, but something must be said, and one must not be silent [to the Question.]

As for Terms which express things that fall under our Senses or Actions, whereof we have a distinct and perfect Idea, it falls out quite otherwise; they may change or vary, and the things we make them to signify may not vary at all in our Minds, or suffer the least Alteration. The Facts, for instance, mention'd in the Apostles Creed, are things of that nature, the Ideas whereof are preserv'd without any Change. As its Articles are plain, few in Number, without any Speculations, and contain only the Primitive Doctrines of Christianity; it was easy therefore to preserve the sense, and to have always a true Knowledge of them: 'Tis a Faith, as I may say, that's born

with us, that offers it self to our Understandings from the Moment we enter into the Church, that is, in the Mouth, and Heart of every Christian; and there is no need of ascending into Heaven, of consulting Councils, nor of descending into the Deeps to know it, and employing Millions of Dragoons to impose the belief of it. Wherefore *Civili in Catech.* 5. *Ruffinus in Exp. Symbol.* *Jerom in Epistola ad Pammach. c. 9.* *Adeodatus de Synt.* had good reason to say, "That the Creed was not [only] written upon paper, but upon the Tables of the heart, and in the Mind of Man. Expositions that Jeremy and St. Paul make use of about the Precepts of the Gospel, to signify, that there's no need of a Teacher to learn them, because Reason is capable of suggesting them, and Memory of retaining them. The Praise of St. Hilary is the more remarkable, because he makes an express Opposition between the Faith graven upon the Heart, and that which is only in the Letter and the Writings of Men: For he congratulates the Western Bishops, for their maintaining the Apostolic Faith, for the Spirit wherewith they were animated, and that they knew not the Forms of Faith which were written by Mens Hands. The Spirit here does not signify the Holy Ghost, as Mons. Du Pin supposes, but the Spiritual Sense in opposition to the Literal. Which shew's, that there was no need of writing down the Apostles Creed, in the first Ages of the Church. Every one had the sense of it in his Mind: As it was short and plain, and consisting only of the principal Facts and Primitive Truths, which constitute the very Essence and Spirit of the Christian Religion, it was easy for the most illiterate to keep it in mind, as to the Substance of it; for the rest every one exprest himself as he pleased. Hence it was, that 'twas very late before any Formula was drawn up, and that too with some difference in the Terms and Number of Articles, parti-

ularly in those which seem to explain one another. It ought not to be wondered at after this, if it be not found among the ancient Doctors, to be just as we have it at this day. They received it only by Tradition, and worded it upon occasion every one in his own way : " The Christians," says *Dufin* (*Tom. 1.* " p. 30.) had this Faith so ready in their " Minds, that they did not stick to any " certain Form ; hence came the difference (in point of Form) of the " Creeds mentioned by the Fathers.

Moreover, it must not be supposed, that when some particular Christians came at length to enlarge the Apostles Creed, by their Platonic Speculations, the People entered into those Notions and Philosophical Ideas. They always kept themselves to that Simplicity of Faith, which the general Spirit of Religion had imprinted upon their Minds. " The Christian Religion," says Mons. *Le Vassor* (*Traité de l'Examen*, ch. 2, p. 69.) " was at no great distance from its first and primitive Simplicity till the Council of Nice. If *Origen* and some others before that attempted to adjust it to the Principles of Pagan Philosophy, their novel Speculations were not generally received. In short, *Origen* shewed us, that nothing but the Word revealed was preached to the People, that is to say, *Jesus Christ crucified* ; but the Word-God glorified was reserved for Persons of the higher Class, that is for Favourite Souls, who had spiritualized themselves in *Plato's School*. Wherefore History tell us, that to bring in this Platonizing Faith into the Church, and to make Entrance for it into the Minds of ordinary Christians, there was need of no less than the Authority of Emperors, the Cabals of Councils, and the Violence of Penal Laws. Monsieur *Jurieu* speaks to the very same effect : " Says he, all the vain empty Speculations of the Doctors of that time (the Fathers of the three first Ages) did no harm to the pure Faith of the

" Church, that is the People (*Tabl. de Socin. 1 part. Let. 6. p. 269.*) The Speculations had not yet reached the People, they continued in the Simplicity —— For the rest, it was for the Speculative Divines, and Philosophers bred in *Plato's School* ; such as the *Justin Martyrs*, the *Tatians*, and the *Ashmagoras*' were, and other Platonizing Doctors of that sort. Then *Jurieu* concludes, saying, " There's no body but knows that Theological Explications are not matters of Faith.

'Tis true, we must do this Justice to *Jurieu*, as to own, that he made room for the Mystery of God in three Persons, in this Simplicity of [the Primitive] Faith. But it would really be a wrong done to his Judgment and good Sense, to believe that he spoke it seriously. For in short, if he would not affirm, that the Belief of three Persons which are but one God, was one of those Platonizing Speculations, against which he so much declaims ; at least he ought to own, that 'tis an Explication that has nothing of Simplicity in it, and which by consequence cannot be a matter of Faith. I desire him to remember a Remark he has made in his seventh Pastoral Letter. " That when Learning was scarce among Christians, two or three Learned Men drew the People into their Opinions. He could have informed us better, that two or three Platonizing Fathers, for they were the Learned Men of the Age, were able to mislead the People from the Simplicity of their Faith to the Theology of *Plato*. If it be true that the People knew this profound Theology, Mons. *Jurieu* has spoken more truly than he thought : For we find at the bottom of the Letter, that two Learned Platonists, *Origen*, who had his Admirers in the East, and *St. Austin* who had his in the West, have not only led the People into their Opinions, but likewise all the Learned Men that came after them, who have only copied from

from them. And consequently this Theology, whether it be to be found only among the Learned, or with the People too, was none other than a *strange Faith*, which the Learned brought into the Church, and after drew the People into

it. It amounts to the same thing, either the People understood it not, or if they did, 'twas by surprize that the Learned impos'd their *Mysteries*, and made the common People receive a Pagan Notion for the Doctrine of J. C.

## C H A P. XX.

## Of the Divine Polity or Oeconomy taught by the Fathers.

**H**aving given some account of the way of *Allegories* us'd by the Fathers, I must not forget to say something also of their *Divine Oeconomy*, which is inseparable from it. And I must say of them, that they made use of a pious Fraud, to represent the Gospel under nobler Ideas, and in a sense elevated to the relish of the Philosophers, becoming all things to all, that they might win them to Jesus Christ: and this is that which is called their *Oeconomy*. I do not say that all the Fathers, particularly the latter, were in the secret of this sort of Conduct. Some of them have suffered themselves to be surprized with the very literal sense; and at last this Mystery, which was at first prudentially designed, degenerated into real Opinions and Metaphysical Squabbles. It's enough then that I observe, that this at first was the thing they chiefly aimed at, who brought into the Church this way of philosophizing. Hence came that famous *Manager of Mystery*, so much talked of by the Antients, and about which the Moderns at this time dispute, tho' 'ne much alter'd indeed, but it flows however from the same Spring. 'Tis known that the Pagans made use of this Method, to keep up the Credit of their Religion, that was filled with ridiculous Storys, scandalous and injurious to their Gods. They had so much address, as to pretend, that a mythological and

mystical sense was hidden under the brage of those Symbols. This one may if one reads the *Author of Heros*, *Life, Heraclides Ponticus* upon the Allegory of *that Poet*, and all the Philosophers who have defended the Pagan Religion against the Attacks of Christian-Writers.

The same may be said of the *Jews*, their Law becoming publick by the Version of the LXX. They were out of Countenance, that a Law given 'em from Heaven, should amuse them with childish and mean Ceremonies, and undertook to defend it from the Scorns of the Profane, by turning all into Allegory, and extracting sublime Interpretations to render it the more venerable. *Pilate* among others has excelled in this way. The Christians very much followed this Practice of the *Jews*, particularly they of *Alexandria*, who learn'd this Custom of the *Therapeutae*. As the *Pharisees* were addicted to their Traditions, the *Essenes* on the contrary were addicted to the way of *Allegory*, being fond of extracting from the Scriptures, *quidlibet ex quilibet*. *Pilate* imitates the latter, and the Christians have followed him. See *Code 205* of *Pistius*, and *Pallier's Miscellan. lib. 2. c. 5.*

The Obscurity of our Saviour's Birth, and the Scandal of his Death mightily perplexed the *Catholicks*; they could not conceal his Death from their Scholars,

was wont to be done from those who were initiated in the Mysteries of *Ceres*, Wherfore they betroust themselves of another Economy, which would lessen their discredit, or balance it with the Honour of a pretended *Pre-existence*, by supposing in Jesus Christ another Nature, which was immortal: and this they represented very much like *Plato's Logos*, pretending to discover an exact conior-mity between the Doctrine of St. John and that of the Philosopher. This Argumentum ad hominem look'd incomparably more convincing to their Novices than that which they drew from Christ's Exaltation, which seem'd somewhat dangerous in giving countenance to the Apotheosis of their false Gods. Hence is it that they rarely make use of the latter, and almost always of the former.

Was it not, I pray, by this Economy that *Tertullian Martyr*, *Clemens* and *Origen* maintained, that virtuous Pagans were in a manner Christians, because they partly understood Reason, or the *Logos*? And by these evident Conformities with 'em, they flatter'd the Pagans, and insinuated themselves very dextrously into their good opinion. *Tertullian Martyr* amasses with great dexterity every thing that was proper in *Apologue*, to colour and to justify the Mystery of the *Nativity* and the *Birth of Christ* (*Apol. 2.*) and takes as much pains to defend the Names and Titles that Christians have given him. "Since the Son of God," says he, "to them, could be but a Man like other Men; he was worthy nevertheless of being call'd the Son of God; since all Writers give to God the Character of being the Father of Men and Gods." If we say further, that besides the birth usually mention'd, this personage was begotten by God, as his Word (*Logos*) herein we should do no more than you have already done, who call *Mercury*, the *Word*, the *Messenger*, and the *Interpreter of God*.

With the same design *Tertullian* (*Apol. 4. 20*) makes a Parallel of the History of

the Son of God, with the Story of *Jesus* Christ's Children. Receive this *Apologue*, says he to the Pagans (Sir), as *testimonia*, youths. This he spoke in *the way of Occam's Accommodation*. And it was not only usual, with these Fathers thus to accommodate themselves to the Prejudices of the Pagans, but by the same method to answer their Objections: For when they objected, that the Adoration of the Christ, a Man, was no less Idolatry than that whereof the Christians accus'd them; 'twas for the Interest of the latter to bewile themselves to their Economy, and to find out the second God of *Plato* in the Divine Power which dwelt in *Jesus Christ*, which might be worship'd without Idolatry, it having made Heaven and Earth. To conclude, tis this Economy that gives Rules to the use of their Method of Allegory, and that futed it to Occasions and Circumstances. To explain this matter, it must be noted, that there are two sorts of Allegory: One, wherein the popular and familiar Ideas are used, to accommodate things to the capacity of the Vulgar, which is called *Parable*, or *Mythology*, and has been us'd by the moral Philosophers. The other, followed by Divines and Speculative Philosophers, who affected *mysterious and profound Senses*, and did accommodate themselves to such as lov'd what we call the *Wonderful*. Of this sort are those nice Allegories of the Fathers, wherein under great and sublime Images, they cover'd the Simplicity or Meanings of the Gospel. But above all, they endeavour'd to aggrandize the Person of our *Saviour*, and the *Sacraments* of the *New Covenant*, wherein one sees nothing but *Bread* and *Wine*, and *Water*. One must consider the turn they give those things, when they speak as magnificently of 'em as they can, and when they would in a manner make that which seems contemptible with the Philosophers, appear, by this artful disguise, to be the very Wisdom of those Philosophers. But, as it is of the

the nature of Parable, to make use of vulgar and popular Images to adapt to the Capacities of the meaner sort their great and more sublime Mysteries, Jesus Christ made use of these in preaching his Gospel to the Poor, and in letting down his Doctrine to meaner Capacities. But the Fathers, who had other Occasions, and were in other circumstances, took quite another way, and follow'd the Rules of their Economy; they advanc'd their Allegory by the most noble and most magnificent Images, to aggrandize the Simplicity of the Gospel, and to make it acceptable, at any rate, to the great Men of the World, to the Learned, and the Philosophers, with whom they convers'd.

'Tis this mischievous Policy that has brought so much confusion into the Christian Religion, that there can be no appealing to pretended Antiquity, the testimony whereof is become altogether useless, and liable to great illusion. One may think of having recourse to the Antients, as to very good Witnesses; but instead of that, we meet with Oracles ambiguous and unintelligible.

A Person of good Abilities, in the last Age complains of this, as well as L. (Michael le Vassor *Traité de l'Examen*, ch. 1. p. 10.) "Since Philosophy, says he, was brought into Christianity, the latter has so visibly degenerated from its primitive Simplicity, that the *Philosophers* themselves have taken notice of it. The Men of thought believed it would be a great Service done to Religion, to render it agreeable to the taste of the Philosophers; they had a mind to reconcile our Mysteries with *Plato's* Principles, which were extremely in fashion; when the Gospel first went abroad into the World, *Origen*, and *St. Austin* afterwards, have to embray'd Theology, the former in the East, and the latter in the Western Church, where both had their Admirers and Disciples, by endeavouring to adjust Christianity to that

Philosophy; that will cost one a world of pains to distinguish that, which they and their Followers have said, with any exactness of thought, upon divers important points of Religion. They give us none but allegorical senses to divers Passages in the Holy Scriptures. Their Expositions appear so wide from the Sense of the Sacred Authors, that one knows not how to understand it, so as to discern the true Doctrine of the Apostles from the particular Speculations of the major part of those (Fathers) to whom we are refer'd, as to faithful Witnesses of the Faith of the Times they liv'd in.

But the Fathers were not content to accommodate their Doctrines to the *Platonick Word* (or *Abys*) but enquir'd further, after another Pre-existence of Jesus Christ, for the satisfaction of the Jews, and they found it in the *Angel* that Spoke to *Moses*, and the other Patriarchs. *Tertullian*, in his Dispute against *Marcion*, lib. 3, speaking of the *State* of Christ before the Revelation of the Gospel, says, that *he was in that allegorical State of spiritual Grace, &c.* These few Words seem to discover the whole Mystery of the Economy of the Antients: For they signify, that Christ was not only represented in the Figures of the Law, but, as *Origen* speaks, that *he was substantially present in Moses and the Prophets*, Tract. 26. in *Mos.* meaning thereby that *Moses* and the Prophets were, if one may so speak, substantial and personal Types of Christ to come; or rather that Christ was then present in the Person of *Moses* and the Prophets, who were his Types. On the like ground may we not say, that he was allegorically present in all the Angels, who spoke from God to Men, and that he was also allegorically present in that Word of God which created the World? that powerful Word, which said, *Let there be Light*, being a Type of this powerful Word, which said by Jesus Christ, *Let the Light shine in the Hearts of Men.*

This

This allegorical Pre-existence of Christ is very agreeable with the Scriptures, which say that of him which cannot belong to any thing but these Types ; as, the *Reproach of Christ*, the *Spirit of Christ prophesying, tempted of Christ*, and other Expressions of that kind, which represent to us Jesus Christ in his *allegorical State* : This particular Commission of Angels and Prophets, being in some sort the *Preludia* of this universal and extraordinary Commission of Jesus Christ with regard to the whole World. I ought not to pass over the Remark of *Father Simon* upon this Economy of the Antients (*Hist. Crit. du N. T. Tom. I. chap. 2.*) "The mingling, says he, of the *Platonick Philosophy* with the *Christian Religion*, was not intended to ruin the Orthodox Faith, but the more easily to persuade the Greeks to embrace the Christian Religion. The Fathers were in this for imitating the Apostles, especially St. Paul, who sometimes did stoop to the Infirmity's of the Weak, becoming all things to all men."

Father *Simon* observes further, that *Clemens of Alexandria* does sometimes carry this Economy too far ; that he applies himself intirely to Allegory, it being fashionable in his time amongst the Christians, especially with the *Gnosticks*, who thought thereby to raise the Credit of the Scriptures ; that he is no ways behind 'em in point of Invention and Subtilty : That this was the more excusable in him, because he liv'd in a great City, where 'tis likely they affected those kind of Subtilties ; and that he believ'd 'em of use to establish the Christian Religion, it being a prudent part in an able Master to adapt things to the capacity of them he is to instruct : That his *Pedagogus*, wherein he was to lay down nothing but plain Instructions, was drawn up with this design ; and that in it he explains the Scriptures in the sublime and allegorical Sense. He observes also, Chap. 4. "That those who had not these

"sublime Notions, pass'd for plain weak Christians, who knew not the design of Religion ; that the *Gnosticks* imagin'd themselves outdid all others in this kind of Knowldg, and that it had been better if the Orthodox had not imitated them therein, but had contented themselves with the literal Expositions of the Scriptures. He goes forward to say, that the Jews had mingled in their Religion divers *Platonick Notions*, whereof one finds at this day not a few in their *Cabalistic Writings*. This made some impression on the Minds of some of the first Christians, who read with pleasure Books that treated of Angels, and their Converse with Men. The same Author makes it appear, "That not only those who rejected the *allegorical way*, were accounted illiterate, but even pass'd for Hereticks too (*ibid. chap. 31.*) and that *Theodosius* of *Niphus*, who followed the literal Sense of the Bible, according to the Method of his Master *Diodorus*, and avoided the spiritual and allegorical Sense, was reckoned for a Person who favour'd *Judaism* by his too literal *Expositions*.

For my part, I make no doubt, but 'twas of that Set of Divines who imitated *Theodosius*, that *Pamphilus* is speaking, when he complains (*Apol. pro Orig.*) "That they who charg'd *Origen* with so many Absurdities, would not admit Allegory to be us'd in expounding the Holy Scriptures. It may be conjectur'd from these words, that the great reason why the *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes* were accounted plain simple People, and poor in the Faith, was this, that they rejected the allegorical Theology of the *Platonizing* and *Gnostick* Christians : The Word [Ebonite] which signifies poor, and the other Word [Gnostick] which signifies knowing, being directly oppos'd. 'Tis certain *Origen* calls the *Ebionites* poor in Spirit, *Philos. c. 1.* because they adher'd too much to the Poverty of the Letter,

Letter, or literal Sense, and despis'd the rich and the sublime Sense of Contemplation. 'Tis moreover upon the same account, that so many great Men are said to *Judaize*, because they were for keeping the Scriptures in their natural and literal Sense; such were *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, *Theodosius*, and others.

'Tis evident that the Fathers, who were for appearing Learned, and would not be outdone by the *Gnosticks*, have allegoriz'd after the very manner of those *Heretics*; but upon such things that had some sort of Foundation in the Scriptures; and in the Philosophy of those Times, embray'd by the Jews, or the *Platonick* Party. As for instance, about the Ideas and Decrees of God; concerning the *Messiah*; about the Soul of the *Messiah*; about the Spirit that form'd, and after sanctified him; about the Angels that were the *Preludia* of his Mission; or lastly, about that *Word* of God, which created the World, to whom they ascrib'd Personality, after the *Platonick* way. The *Word*, or *Logos*, might signify all these things, the Wisdom of God that dwelt in Jesus Christ; his pre-existent Son; the Spirit that form'd him, and the facility with which he wrought so many Miracles, only, as it were, at the expence of a Word. After this manner the Jews have allegoriz'd upon the seven things that they say were created before the World, among which they count the Name, or the Glory of the *Messiah*. To say the truth, the Economy of the Fathers very often varies: For at one time they are for concealing the *sublimer part* of their Mysteries, that they mayn't give offence to some sturdy Minds, that will not so readily give way to mystical Notions. At other times they pass over the plainer part of Religion, to gain upon their speculative Gentlemen, who admire chiefly what we call the *Wonderful*. But however, they are always constant in purifying this Design of their Economy and Rule of Prudence, in adapting themselves to the

*Genius and Relish* of every body, in making Mystery of every thing, to beget in their Scholars a Veneration for their Opinions, when they come to be acquainted with 'em. And further, they take care to distinguish between those Opinions, which were transmitted to 'em by the Writings of the Apostles, and others which came from the same Apostles by Tradition only, and in *Mystery*, as St. Basil speaks (*Liber de Spir. S. ad Amphil. Cap. 27.*) that is, by the way of *secret Discipline and Instruction*. Clemens of Alexandria makes mention of these last Opinions (*Stromat. 5.* p. 576) and calls 'em, *The Leftin of the Perfect*, which consists in certain spiritual and sublime Senses, which were deliver'd *viva voce*, and by Tradition; but the Apostles could not set 'em down in their Epistles.

This *Expedient of Secret Tradition* open'd a wide Field for philosophizing according to their humour, and is adapt'd to the purpose of introducing new Opinions into Religion. We must be upon our guard when we are reading their Writings, and take very little of them in the literal Sense, where every thing almost is allegorical, and they are throuout purfusing what we call the *Wonderful*. 'Tis well known to the Protestants, that the *Declamations* and *Apostrophe's* of the Fathers have given birth to some Errors, and the *Idolatry* practis'd at this day. They know well enough how to account for the hyperbolical Expositions of the Antients upon the Eucharist; as, that Jesus Christ was offer'd upon an Altar; that he was slain, strangl'd, extended, died, carry'd, bury'd, &c. And these ridiculous Apostrophe's: *O great and sacred Passover, the Purgation of our Sins! &c.* (*Greg. Naz.*) *O Divine and sacred Mystery!* vouchsafe to remove the Veil wherewith we are encompassed, and manifest your self clearly to us, by enlightning with your brightness the Eyes of our Mind. (*See Counterfeit Denis.*) These Apostrophe's seem to deify the Sacrament, and to make it a Person. Why

should we not acknowledg at the same time, that the over-curious *Platonism* of the same Fathers has led 'em into those extravagant Descriptions, whereby they have made a second God, a Person of the Word or *Logos*, a Son begotten before Ages, and incarnate in time? Mysteries no less strange than that of ~~fragile~~ incarnation.

Who does not see that they had a mind to speak magnificently of every thing? They ascribd a Divine and extraordinary Virtue to the Oil and the Cream: They say, that the Holy Ghost has chang'd and transform'd 'em by a Divine Efficacy. They have said no less of Baptism; for they believ'd the Divinity, and the Holy Ghost descending, and insinuating it self into the Water us'd in that Sacrament, imparts to it the Power and Virtue of regenerating. They allow that the Eucharist shews a Divine and quickening Virtue emanating from the Body of the *incarnate Word*. The *Word*, according to them, is an Emanation from the Substance of *God*: The Body of Christ is hypothetically united to the *Word*: The Bread is hypothetically united to that Divine Body, and consequently hath the quickening Virtue of the *Word*. They own a twofold Emanation, the *Word* is the *Emanation of God*, and the quickening Virtue of his Flesh is an *Emanation of the Word*. And they hold a twofold Incarnation; one of the *Word* in the Body of Jesus Christ, and another of the quickening Virtue of the Body of Christ, in the Bread of the Sacrament. This was a System of Policy well contriv'd, whereby these cunning Doctors brought nothing less than Divinity into every thing, and spoke with advantage upon the meanest subjects, to make 'em look mysterious and venerable. It may be said of them, as has been observ'd of those who make Canons in *Councils*, that they spake more than they meant; so that many Ages after, Mysteries are discover'd in their Expressions, which they never dreamt of. I have

met with nothing so like that, as these two Apostrophe's, which the Church of Rome chanter in her Liturgy: One, is address'd to the Trinity, *O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons, and One God, have Mercy upon us miserable Sinners.* The other is address'd to the Cross of Christ, *O Cross, my only Hope, salute thee at this time of thy Passion, increase the Righteousness of Good Men, and pardon the Crimes of the Wicked.* Here you have two *Saints*, which one and the same Superstition hath canoniz'd, two Prayers cast in the same Mould; for both one and t'other are the fruit of *Idolatry*, and of *false Eloquence*.

Upon which I will make this Observation, that it has fal'n out with the Economy of these Primitive Fathers, as it has with the Admirers of Episcopacy here in *England*, who having retain'd a Liturgy and divers Ceremonies, that they might bring over the more Pupils to their Communion, yet they still continue to look upon those things, at this time, in a sort necessary to Religion, altho' there's now no more occasion for that Reason of Prudence; and even as great a Reason of Charity, and a second Reason of Prudence, should oblige 'em to relax, or lay 'em by, to gain the Non-Conformists. 'Tis the same case with the Allegorical and Occconomical Mystery of the ancient Fathers: - The Reason of Prudence ceaseth, since we have now no more *Platonists* to gain, nor *Gnosticks* to outbrave, the Economy of the *Logos* ought to cease at the same time. Yet we do in this, as in every thing else, we never rejoin; and it often happens that the Religion of posterity is nothing else but the mere Policy or *Economy* of their Ancestors.

I have but one Reflection more, to shew the Source of this *Allegory*. *Cerinus* was the Man who first brought in this usage of *Platonizing*: As he is the first Author of a *Logos*, or an *invisible Christ*, he is also the first who began to make use of the *Economy* in the Christian Religion.

Tis he who turns the Resurrection into Allegory, explaining it by the Evangelical Regeneration, or Father by the State of Quietude, wherein the Contemplative are, when they quit this World to raise themselves to the Speculation of Mysteries, and the Knowledge of Ideas. The Quietists have not fail'd to frame an Ideal and Allegorical Word or *Logos*, even as they have also taught an Allegorical and Ideal Resurrection. Without question they allegoriz'd, when they said, Christ descended into Jesus, meaning, that Jesus was anointed, and made the Christ, when the Holy Ghost descended upon him at his Baptism. (See Gryphus ad. 1. Cor. i. 5:1.) They did no less allegorize, when upon the same ground they added, that the Christ, which descended on Jesus, ascended into Heaven, and left him at the moment of his Passion. By which they meant, as St. Paul says, that Jesus humbl'd himself, that he laid by the Power, and the Spirit with which he was endu'd, and left himself to be crucified, as a Man feeble, and without Power, or rather as a Slave. (*Tertul. contra Prax.* cap. 30.) St. Hilary, and St. Ambrose did, nor, understand so much fineness, since they made bold to say bluntly, and without figure, that the Word was divorc'd from the Flesh, that the God was separated from the Man, and left him to himself.

In short, that which I am saying of the use of this Allegory, amounts to this: Tis well-known, that the Pagans invented three sorts of Allegory, the Mythical, the Moral, and the Theological; which ne-

ver fail'd 'em at a pinch, to cover the absurdity of their Fables, and of the History of their Gods. 'Tis after this way they defended themselves, as we see in St. Clemens his *Recognitions*, lib. 10. cap. 30. saying, that the literal Sense of their Fables was contriv'd in condescension to the Vulgar; but that they had besides an allegorical and elevated Sense for the Learned. That in this last Sense they said, for example, that Jupiter from his own Brain begat the Goddess Minerva, that is, Wisdom; to shew, that 'tis by his Wisdom that the Father of all things created the World. One may truly say, the Christians have in a manner follow'd the same Method; nor not go mention their many Moral allegories, which they invented to conceal that which seemed to 'em too low and mean for the Majesty of the H. Scriptures, 'tis sufficient to observe here, that all they have told us of an eternal and invisible Son, of his incomprehensible Generation, and other Speculations of the like nature, is nothing else but a theological Allegory, by which they varnish'd whatever appear'd too mean in the eyes of Philosophers, in the History of Jesus Christ. The Pagans, and the Christians have hereby equally quieted themselves of a difficulty, that expos'd 'em to mutual Reproaches. The Pagans were affam'd of their ridiculous Fables, and the Christians were of the Cross of Christ; and both of 'em surmounted those Inconveniences by a dextrous use of (what we call) the Wonderful, which is to be met with in their Allegories.

## C H A P. XXI.

*An Account of what the Fathers called Theology.*

**W**HAT the Fathers called *Theology*, is another sort of *Machina*; they acted withal to represent to us a contemplative Gospel, formed after the Ideas of *Plato*, which theologizes, that is, *Speaks of any Person in the same Stile, as one naturally speaks of God*: as if the Person had a miraculous Birth, to say he *came down from Heaven*; if he reform'd Mankind, to say he *created the World*; if God rais'd him to any extraordinary Dignity, to say that he *was begotten of God*. All this so far agrees with the Scriptures, but especially with the Stile of *St. John*, who affects throughout his Writings to theologize all the Subjects he treats on. I will give you but this one Instance, *John 3. 13. No Man, says he, has ascended into Heaven, &c.* The foregoing Words do shew that he theologized in this Passage: he had said to the *Jews*, *How will you believe, if I tell you of Heavenly things? For no Man has ascended into Heaven, &c.* that is, to say plainly, that no Man can acquaint you with Heavenly Things, but he who came down from Heaven, or who drew his Origin from Heaven. The sense therefore is this, *The Son of Man who was born from Heaven by the Holy Ghost* (and on this account may be said, in the theological way, *to have come down from Heaven*) *The same Son of Man was raised to the Knowledge of all the Secrets of Heaven, by the Gifts he received from the same Spirit*; and on that account it may be further said in the theological Stile, *That he ascended into Heaven*. No Man then was rais'd to the Knowledge of the Secrets of Heaven, but he who was originally from Heaven, that is, the Son of

Man who was wholly from Heaven. After this manner the *Jews* did theologize, when they said, that their Law was before the Creation of the *World*. The *Mahometans* do the same, when they speak so magnificently of the *Gospel*, as to say it *fell down from Heaven*; sometimes speaking the same thing of the *Alcoran*, which they call the *Word of God*, which was not made, but came down from Heaven. *Barthol. Edeissen. Confit. Agar.* They give also the same Honour to *Jesus Christ*, who because he was born without a human Father, after an extraordinary manner, is, in their oriental and theological Stile, the *Eternal Word*, the *Word of God* by way of Excellence: that is, he is the *Word*, 1. Because he had no other Father, than that *Word* and that Commandment had, which made the *World* from nothing. 2. Because he with the assistance of that very *Word*, has distinguish'd himself by a great number of *Miracles*. *Hössinger Hist. Orient. lib. 1. cap. 3. pag. 105. &c. Simon Voyage du Mont. Liban. p. 262.*

Again, nothing is more reasonable, than that manner of *Theologizing* things great and extraordinary, provided all these pompous Expressions be taken in a metaphorical sense. But the Misfortune is, that the *grosser Platonism* has impos'd upon the Fathers, who have spoken in this manner of *J.C.* in the very Letter: So that to *theologize* with them, is to ascribe to *Jesus Christ* the *Divine Nature and Substance* with all its Attributes, or at least to ascribe to him a *Nature* very near and like to that of *God*; for so *Eusebius*, *arianizing upon the Nature of the pre-existent Word*, calls him, *Hist. Eccles.*

*Eccles. lib. 1. cap. 2. The Prince of the Heavenly Host, the Angel of great Counsel, the Minister of the Will of God, the second Cause of all things, a God and a King who received the Government from the Father, with his Divinity. Ask him from whence he took all these fine Titles of the Word: he'll tell you from the *Mystical Theology* of the Scriptures. The current Theology of the Scriptures says nothing of this: 'tis no matter for that, some know how to feign and suppose a mystic Theology, which does. But 'twas not an easy thing to make a God begotten before Ages, of a Man born at Bethlehem. There's something that answers all difficulties, and that's another Expedient they have thought on, which is, to distinguish the two Natures in Jesus Christ, the Divine Nature which they call *Theology*, and the Human which they call *Oeconomy*; and to frame hereupon a new Word which signifies nothing, because it carries to the Mind at the same time two Ideas that destroy each other, viz. *Man-God*, or a *God-Man*. They have left to the *Man* the History and Facts of the Gospel, but for the *God* they have found out a nobler Gospel in the World of Ideas.*

'Tis somewhat entertaining to observe what the Author of the *ad Homil.* in *diversos* ascribed to *Origen*, says to this purpose: Having compar'd St. John to a *Spiritual Eagle*, who soars with a swift Flight into the sublimest Regions of *Theology*, and the greatest heights of *Contemplation*; he afterwards draws a Parallel between him and St. Peter, and distinguishes between *Faith* and *Science*; between *Prædilex*, which is common to all Christians, and *Contemplation*, which is a *Gospel* for *Seraphic Souls*. He makes St. Peter the Type of *Faith* and *Prædilex* in his good Confession, *Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God*. But he makes St. John to be as it were the Model of *Science* and *Contemplation*, with respect to the admirable *Exordium* of his Gospel; *In the beginning was the Word, &c.* "St.

"John, says he, resting himself alone upon the Bosom of Christ, this Privilege or Favour was to him the Sign and Sacrament, or Seal, of *Contemplation*. This John, says he, who was not a mere Man, but more than a Man, since by the Penetration of his Mind and his Wisdom, he enter'd into the Secrets of one Essence and three Substances, or of three Substances in one Essence. This John who deified himself, could not by his Penetration reach God himself, till he had first made himself a God. This is very loftily spoke, the Fathers were not content to make a God of the *Word*; they went farther, and make a God of St. John too, because he spoke so divinely. 'Twas a Transport of their Zeal and Affection to the *Word*, when they deified the Apostle, who had before in their Opinion so well deified the *Word*. This Zeal of theirs extends it self even to the *Divine Plato*, to whom they thought themselves no less obliged; for they have done him the Honour to say, that when Jesus Christ descended into Hell, *Plato* was the first who came before the *Eternal Word*, of whom he had spoken with that Magnificence in his Writings.

By virtue of the same true *Platonis* Zeal, *Eusebius de Vita Constant.* lib. 3. cap. 55: calls Constantine an *Eagle*, and honours him with the same Elogy that was given St. John; for how great must the Obligation be to this new Apostle, for discovering the profound Mystery of *Consubstantiality*, for which the Church was indebted to him? 'Tis for the same reason that he has the Character bestow'd upon him, of being a *profound Divine*, an *Expounder of Mysteries*, the *Bird of Paradise*, &c. by the counterfeit *Dionysius*, who has found Books stuffed with the most refined *Platonism*. He who knew so much of the Secrets of the Celestial Court, and has told us such News of the Hierarchy of the Angels, might as well instruct us in the Nature, the Number, and the Order of the *Divine Persons*. The

These mystical Eagles know how, when they please, to soar beyond the bounds of Revelation, and to penetrate into the profound Secrets of the Deity, I would say of the *Unity in Trinity* and the *Trinity in Unity*. And what Praises are due to them for such fine Discoveries? Certainly the Author I am speaking of deserves himself the Character of an Eagle; for observe how far he advances his Philosophy. He will have the Scriptures to be an intelligible World, made up of four Elements. The Historical Part he calls the Earth, the Moral Part the Water: that Part which is the object of natural Science is the Air: and lastly that which is the Object of the most exalted Contemplation is the fourth Element or Fire. And 'tis this Contemplation, says he, that the Greeks call Theology: Whence he takes occasion to call St. John a great Theologue or Divine; "Because, says he, he raises himself "far above the Historical, the Moral, "and the natural Objects. Thus Dionysius the Areopagite, speaking of the same Gospel of St. John, calls it *supernatural and transcendental Theology*. In short, Mons. Daille, *de Libris suppos.* Dionys. &c. c. 16. tells you, That one finds in the three other Gospels, nothing but the *OEconomy of Jesus Christ*; but one sees in the Gospel of St. John the *Theology of Jesus Christ*.

Hence it appears, that the Antients did not call by the Name of *Theology*, that Science which treats of God in a plain obvious manner; but such refined contemplative Discourses, which speak of him in the *abstract way*: so that their Theology was in a manner the same with what we call Metaphysics, that is, the Philosophy of curious abstracted Minds. How great an Abuse of the Word was this! As if true *Theology* was not that, which had for its Object a sensible Revelation, and a plain Gospel suited to the Capacities of the common People, which these Gentlemen are pleas'd to call a Gospel that is gross and corporeal.

How! The Chimeras and the crude Imaginations of the Mind of Man shall be compared to the most noble Elements, and the first Facts of the Gospel with the Precepts of a good Life; that is, *History* and the *Moral* (upon which, as upon two firm Pillars, are founded our Faith and Practice) shall in their account be no more than the terrestrial and grosser Element. Is not that to reduce the *Science of the Perfect* to carpal Rudiments? I might as well like Homer's Theology, who at the same time as he deified Men, debas'd the Gods. Agreeable to the Model of this noble Theology, Eusebius Demonst. Evang. lib. 4. and Origen Tom. 2. in Joan. have fancied a certain Son of God, whom they call Θεολογί-  
περ Οὐρανός, The theological Son, or the Son who is theologized, that is without doubt, a Son in Idea, the Object of their profound Speculations. For to theologize, according to them, is not only to speak of God and his Attributes, but of Angels too, of *Aions*, of *Ideas*, of *Emanations*; and in a word, of every thing that belongs to the intelligible World of the *Platonicis*; Theology being a Term affected by all the contemplative Gentlemen, whether Orthodox or Gnosticks. These sort of Folks did not regard the Facts of the Gospel, which prove its Divine Authority, any otherwise than as grosser Proofs proper for vulgar weaker Minds. But for Contemplation, the Case was quite otherwise; this they thought a noble and powerful Medium, by which Souls of the first Rank elevated themselves to the Knowldg of the noblest Truths. Yet the Gospel is not founded upon any thing but *Facts*, and the chief Objects of our Faith are certain Facts contained in the Apostles Creed. Is it not therefore a putting the Gospel upon another Foot, if we carry on our Contemplations to Abstractions, and the Ideas of a crude chimerical Metaphysics? 'Tis an extravagant System, if instead of Facts well prov'd and rightly circumstanced, there be nothing left but a mere Operation of the

the Understanding, and an *Ens Rationis*, which these Gentlemen are pleas'd to call the *Word* or the *Son theologized*.

That great Man Mons. Jurieu, whom God was pleased to favour with the knowldg of every thing, did not fail to set aside this *false Theology* of the *Fathers* (*7 Let. Past. de la 3. Année*) "Be-  
" fides the Faith of the Vulgar, says he,  
" which was immediately founded up-  
" on the Sacred Writings, the Doctors  
" fram'd a *Theology*, that is, they under-  
" took to expound the Mysteries in a  
" sense beyond that wherein the Holy  
" Scriptures themselves have delivered  
" them. And 'tis in that they have  
" disagreed, and one must not wonder  
" at it, because the things they went  
" about to explain were profound, and  
" it may be inexplicable; and because  
" they made use of a false Philosophy,  
" which they brought into their *Theolo-  
" gy*. And by so doing they have rui-  
" ned *Theology*, and at last Religion in  
" all Ages. The Faith of the Antients  
" therefore must not be condemned as  
" if it were changed, altho' they dis-  
" greed in their *Theology*. And it  
" must be noted, that this *Theology*  
" should not be admitted into the *Faith*:  
" that is, *Articles of Faith* should not  
" be formed out of *Theological Expositi-  
" ons*. Is not this much for the Ho-  
" nour of the *Theology* of the Antients?  
According to Mons. Jurieu,  
these good Doctors could not *theologize*  
the *Son*, without hazarding the *Bath*;  
and consequently, one ought not to re-  
ceive amongst the *Articles of Faith* their  
theological Explications, concerning a  
*Son begotten and not made*, an *Internal Word*, and a *Word brought forth*, &c.  
Nevertheless it's well known, that the  
Fathers consider'd the theological Sense  
not only as true, but as that which the  
Spirit of God had chiefly in its view.  
So that they who would impose the  
*Faith* of the theological Sense of  
the *Word*, because the Fathers urg'd  
it, are themselves obliged to receive all

the other theological Senſes, which the  
same Fathers have given to so many other  
Terms in Scripture, and which they be-  
lieve to be no less the Purport and De-  
sign of the Holy Ghost, which yet is  
not done, but they are looked upon even  
as ridiculous. Why therefore is it  
not acknowledged bona Fide also, that  
the Exposition of the *Logos or Word*, is  
one of those wretched Allegories so  
much declaimed against at that day, and  
an Article of that *false Theology*, which  
is incompatible with the *Christian Faith*?

But let us pay as much respect to the  
Fathers as we can, let us preserve their  
*Theology*; be it so, provided that the  
theological Sense be not said to be de-  
signed for any other than *contemplative*  
and *seraphic Minds*, and that no more  
than the Faith or Belief of the plain  
natural ſenſe be requir'd of Men as Men.  
Origen was too fair to desire more than  
this, he acquaints his Readers at the be-  
ginning of his Book *regi Apollinis*, that  
the Sacred Writers did not concern them-  
selves with abſtruse Matters and specula-  
tive Subjects, which few of them, whom  
they called to the Christian Religion,  
were capable of understanding; but con-  
fined themselves to those few clear Arti-  
cles, which were necessary for the Refor-  
mation of the World, to bring them in-  
to a State of Righteousness, and give  
them hopes of Immortality: Leaving  
the more refined Contemplations, which  
were not contrary to prime Truths, to the  
commendable Curiosity of those, whom  
Nature and Education had qualify'd for  
such Enquiries.

Dr. Rust (in his Discourse of *Origen*  
and the chief of his Opinions) has ob-  
served also: " That there were necessa-  
" ry Truths, which the Apostles had  
" clearly taught, and the Church recei-  
" ved, the contrary whereto cannot be  
" received, without retrenching an es-  
" sential part of Religion. But that  
" there were besides some Contemplati-  
" ons, about which the Scriptures had not  
" determin'd any thing; and that the  
" Truth

" Truth as to these matters was pur-  
" posely concealed by the Holy Ghost,  
" as *Origen* thought, to excite their Stu-  
" dy and Industry, who were Lovers of  
" the Truth, that the Discovery of so  
" great a Treasure might be a Recom-  
" pence for their pious Enquiries. With-  
out doubt all the other Fathers agreed in  
this very Principle with *Origen*, that the  
contemplative Subjects were not necessary  
nor essential to Religion, that they  
did not oblige ordinary Christians, and  
that they were left to the commendable  
Enquiries of the *Christians*. *Servetus*, who  
constantly imitates the Fathers, agrees in  
this, tho he was in other respects a great  
Admirer of *Platonism* and *Contemplation*.  
The Apostles, says he, *de Trinit. lib.*  
" 2. p. 50. did not rashly publish this  
great Mystery of the *Incarnation* of  
the Word; 'twas after several Essays,  
and having fasted and prayed, that St.  
*John* pronounced these Words, *In the  
beginning was the Word, &c.* 'Twas suffi-  
cient to Salvation to believe, that *Je-  
sus was the Christ or the Messiah, the  
Son of God, the Saviour of the World*.  
The common People were justified by  
this Faith alone, altho they did not  
exactly know his Divinity. You  
therefore, pious Readers, who are not  
able to comprehend the manner of his  
*Generation*, nor the whole Fulness of  
his Divinity, always believe that he is  
the *Messias*, begotten of God, and thy  
Saviour. This is the only thing you  
should believe, that you may live by  
him.

But let us hear *Origen* speak for him-  
self; 'tis in his Preface to St. *John*, that  
one shall find the famous distinction he  
makes between the *intelligible* and the  
*sensible Gospel*; and how he there divides  
*Christians* into two *Classes*, the one of  
those who are Children in the Faith, and  
are led by the *Rudiments* of the *Gospel*;  
and the other of those intelligent and ele-  
vated *Minds*, who are capable of under-  
standing the *Divinity* of the glorified *God*:  
" That Doctor or Teacher, says he, who

" is willing to profit all Persons, cannot  
" however make the *secret and sublime*  
" Christianity known to such who can  
" only understand the plain and the re-  
" vealed Christianity. Therefore 'tis  
" necessary that we should be Ministers of  
the *Gospel*, as well in the *Letter* as  
" in the *Spirit*, and that we preach the  
" sensible or corporeal *Gospel* (as he stiles  
it) When we see it proper, we tell  
the *Carnal*, that we aim at nothing  
" else, but to know *Jesus Christ crucified*.  
But when we meet with the *elevated*  
" Minds, that are advanced in the Doc-  
trine of our *Saviour*, and inflamed  
with the Love of *Heavenly Wisdom*,  
" 'tis these we acquaint with the  
" Knowledg of the Word or *Logos*. And  
in his 7th Book against *Celsus*, " There  
is not one Person, says he, to whom  
*Jesus Christ* does not give a taste of  
these *Mysteries* some way or other:  
For he imparts his *Theology* to the  
Wise, who raise their *Minds* to con-  
template *sublime Subjects*. On the  
other hand, he accommodates himself  
to the Capacity of the Common Peo-  
ple, of Idiots, of the Weak, of Wo-  
men, of Slaves, &c. He affords  
them such means of a good Life as  
they seek after, keeping from them  
such Notions as they cannot compre-  
 hend.

Thanks be to *God* I can now take  
Breath: The *Doctrine of God the Word*,  
is no more than *secreet* (or *mystical*)  
Christianity, not necessary to the *Vulgar*,  
and serves only for *Contemplation*. May  
it continue to be the Study of *contem-  
plative Minds*, who were born for the pur-  
pose of *knowing Mysteries*, and have  
Skill to advance their *Knowledg beyond  
Revelation*. It's enough for me, that I  
have their Leave to content my self with  
*plain revealed Christianity*, which is the  
Object of Faith; and that they allowing  
me the *Rudiments* (or *Lessons*) of the  
*Gospel* for my Guide, I may say, with  
their Leave, as the *Apostle* and other  
*plain simple Christians* of the same *Class*,

I know nothing but Jesus Christ crucified. Really one could not but with surprize hear so great a Doctor as Origen treating the Christian Religion, and the Theology of St. Paul so unworthily; if one did not know at the same time, his Fondness for Platonism. What! shall this Contemplation be accounted the sublime Christianity, because it has found out Objects of it self without the help of Revelation? What then is that poor Faith that's founded upon Objects revealed? Can it be any thing more or less than a carnal Christianity? 'Tis some favour however that it may be Christianity: Tho so much as that will hardly be granted, at this time of Day. They who know nothing but a crucified Christ, do not pass even for Christians now; a deified Jesus, is the only Orthodoxy.

If you have a mind to observe also what a prodigious difference there is between the Simplicity of the Apostolic Faith, and the Mystery of Platonism; you need only to consider how little regard it had to the first: as soon as any one own'd this Fundamental Article, that Jesus was the Messiah, he was instantly baptized and received as a true Member of the Church. But when its Articles of Faith were enlarged, and became inexplicable by the profound Speculations with which they were clost, how cautiously and warily did they initiate Persons in the Theology of the same Church. This is plain from the several degrees of the catechized State, thro' which their Novices passed. At first they did not suffer them to come within their Churches, then they admitted 'em only to hear Sermons, after that they might be present at the Prayers; at last after long Instructions, they were qualified for Baptism: *Tunc milie erat Platonis condere gentem;* So great a Task had they to establish the Platonic Theology! Will it not be said, that these are the same Formalities that we us'd in admitting the ancient Myths? Thro' how many degrees must they pass, before they were admitted to enter the

Sanctuary of the Great Goddess? that is, before they became *Epopœ* or Eye-Witnesses of the most private Ceremonies. The Pagans lost nothing (in the Forms of Initiation) by embracing the Christian Religion.

But this is not all, it must be farther consider'd, what a Headroll of Mysteries are taught in their Catechisings: Take but that of Cyril of Jerusalem, and you will certainly meet with them in him. There you have the Trinity, the Eternal Generation, the Incarnation, the sacred and venerable Sacrifice, and many other things of that nature, that must be known, he tells you, in order to Baptism. If any one of them be neglected, there's no Admission for you. All these Mysteries have an essential Band of Union between them; so that if any one of them be not understood, you are in peril of being ignorant of all the rest. And hereupon Cyril recommends to the Catechized, before all other things, the Knowledge of these Mysteries. What a Drudgery is here for the poor Novices! Incomprehensible Mystery, and a Labyrinth in Theology! And besides, which is a little wonderful, he does not forget that Mystery of Mysteries, and sublimer part of Theology, I mean the Doctrine of Transubstantiation: "There is no longer (says he to his Novices) Bread or Wine, let your Senses say what they please, you are not to regard them, but the Testimony of Faith. Since J.C. has said of the Bread, *This is my Body,* who dares call it in question? And since he has said, *This is my Blood,* who dares say it is not? He at other times changed Water into Wine, and is he not to be believed, when he says he has changed the Wine into his Blood? &c. Here he aquites himself like an Orator and a Sophister too. Can any body wonder after this, if the new baptized were deluded into the Belief of the Trinity with such Harangues as these? The Artifice is the same in both Cases.

Wherefore the Author of the Book of the *Sacraments*, takes care to compare these two Mysteries, and to prove them, as I may say, by one another, shewing that what we receive in the *Eucharist*, is as really the true Flesh of Christ, as he is truly the consubstantial Son of God: "As Jesus Christ, says he, is the true Son of God, and is so not only by Grace as Men are, but as he is a Son of the Substance of the Father: So it is the Flesh of Christ we receive, and the Blood of Christ that we drink. One deep calls upon another. The Doctrine of the *Consubstantiality*, &c. is the Model and Original to the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. And the first serves for a Guide and a Light, to conduct you thro the Perplexities and Obscurities of the last, for they are Twin-Sisters, born in *Plato's School*.

That which is remarkable is, that *Justin*, the first of the *Platonizing Fathers*, made the very same Comparison; so natural was it for *Platonism* to sort these two Mysterys, and make 'em Companions: "We do not (says he, *Apol.* 2.) receive these things as common Bread or common Wine: but just as by the Word of God Jesus Christ our Saviour was made Man, and took Flesh and Blood to save us; so we are taught that the Elements, wherewith our Flesh and Blood are nourished by the Alteration of them, being consecrated by the Power of the Word, are the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ incarnate. The Protestant Writers observe from this Passage, as Dr. *Stillingfleet* for one, in the 35 p. of his first Dialogue of the Trinity and Transubstantiation compar'd: "That *Justin* really ascribes to the same *Logos* or Word of God, the Body that was in the Womb of the Virgin, and that Body which is

"upon the Altar; and that in like manner the Holy Ghost makes the Elements to become the Body and Blood of Christ, not by an Hypostatic Union, but by Divine Influence and Operation. But I must tell you too, that the Fathers understood no more than *Operation* or *Influence*, by the *Word* or the *Spirit*, which they say did consecrate the Elements, and change them into the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ. So also they meant no more than *Influence*, and not a *Person*, by the *Word* or the *Holy Ghost*, which formed and sanctified the Body of Jesus Christ in the Womb of the Virgin, whereby he was properly the Son of God. For why should an Hypostatic Union be rather infer'd from this Passage, *The Word was made Flesh*, than from, *This Bread is my Body*? Either there is an Hypostatic Union of the Bread and Flesh of Christ, or there's none at all of the *Word* and *Flesh* of Christ. By the Power of the *Word* the Bread becomes the Body of Christ; by the same Power the Man, or the Son of Mary, was the Son of God, the Case is the same. What then is to be done? Why, *Mysteries* must be had at any rate, and the Machines of *Platonism* will bring upon the Stage as many as you please, of the grossest and most absurd: You must abandon your Reason, 'tis rashness to be inclined to hearken to Reason. Let Reason submit herself to Faith, and give her alone leave to speak. The *Papists* require us to abandon our Senses, but the *Trin-ns* will have us renounce our Reason. I am no Christian, in the Judgment of the latter; if I am not a *Bute*, a Brute did I say, if I am not a Block. Error is fruitful, and leads us into the grossest Absurdities, and 'tis the System of these Absurdities that is titled *Theology*.

## C H A P. XXII.

## Of the True Oeconomy.

TIS certain then that the Antients were unacquainted with good Divinity, and knew less of the true Oeconomy. They believ'd their Platonism, whereof they were mighty fond, gave 'em great advantages over the Pagan Philosophers, and they us'd it for Reasons of Prudence: And as they were for the most part Gentiles by birth, they knew not the antient Jewish Oeconomy, which would have put 'em in the right way; or it may be, they were rather inclin'd to pursue their own Bigotries. Their Oeconomy is this: As in a Family, the Father and the Son are but One Lord, when the Son rules in the Name, and by the Authority of his Father, who has transfer'd the Exercice of that Right to him; 'tis the same thing, say they, in the Church, which is the Family of God. The Father and the Son are but One, by virtue of that Oeconomy which lodges a Power in the Son's hands, to dispose of the Father's Favours, and to exercize all Authority. 'Tis thus Tertullian explains the Oeconomy, in his Discourse against Praxeas. He shews him, that he does not destroy the Notion of a Monarchy, or the Government of One over the Universe, because the Father may exercize it by the Ministry of his Son, or such as he shall think fit to substitute in his room, as, the Angels, his Officers and Commissioners: but chiefly because the Son does nothing but at the Will of his Father, and with a Power he has receiv'd. Which is evident even from this, that he shall one day surrender it to his Father, as the Apostle tells us, and the Son himself shall be subject to him.

Lactantius purfuses exactly the Steps of Tertullian (in lib. 4. c. 29.) "When a

Father, says he, has a Son whom he dearly loves, giving him the Title of Lord, with Authority; if notwithstanding, this Son continues in his Father's House under him, it may be said however, according to the Civil Law, that 'tis but one House, and one Master or Lord. So this World is but one House or Family, and the Father, and the Son who governs it with the Father's Consent, are but One God; since that One is *an Two*, and the *Two* as *One*. And 'tis not to be wonder'd at, seeing that the Son is in the Father, because the Father loves the Son: And the Father is in the Son, because the Son obeys faithfully the Father's Will, and does nothing but what the Father wills, or commands him. God therefore, as Tertullian shews, may communicate his Right to all intelligent Creatures, and use in a way of condescension their Ministry, to make himself known to his Children: For as he is by his Nature incomprehensible, his Supreme Majesty being far above all his Creatures, he stoops as it were by this Method to their shallow Capacities. 'Tis thus at other times that he us'd the Ministry of Angels, and at that day the Ministry of a Man, whom he made his Son, and Heir of his House. In short, this Dispensation by his Son under the New Testament, differs not from that of the Angels in the old Administration; only in this, that the latter was temporary and provisional, but that of Christ is perpetual. The Angels exercis'd their Oeconomy, as Ministers commiss'd and delegated; Jesus Christ exercis'd *his* in the capacity of a Son and Heir, who continuallways in the House or Family. *They who know* the antient Oeconomy

Oeconomy to be such, as St. Paul and St. Stephen have discover'd it to be, who acquaint us that 'twas Angels, or an Angel, which gave the Law, and said, *I am the Lord, &c. I am the God of Abraham, &c.* They, I say, were in no danger of believing that 'twas the Incomprehensible and Invisible God who appear'd to the Jews: They were assur'd that it was none other than his Angel, his Word, his Face, or his Person, by which he made himself to be seen and understood; accommodating himself by this Dispensation to the Weakness of Men, who could not see God, and live. But they who comprehended not this Oeconomy of Goodness and Condescension, grossly fancied this Angel to be an uncreated One, as they call'd him, or the Supreme God himself. As if it were not the grossest absurdity to imagine, that the Supreme God had put his Name upon the Supreme God. If this Angel was really Fabulous by Nature, could he receive this Name from another? Has he, in his Manifestation, occasion for another Name, and another Authority besides his own?

The same Mistake has happen'd with regard to the true Oeconomy by Jesus Christ. The Mystery and Secret (of the Dispensation) being not known, that Man has been taken for the Supreme God, or an uncreated Angel, who was born of a Virgin, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and invested with the Power of the Father, who is that Word and that Oracle, by which the Father has been pleas'd to speak to us in these last days: His Oeconomy being no longer to reveal himself by the Angels, but in the Flesh of his Son, the visible Image of the Invisible God, the Face, the Character, or the Person (*as he is called*) of the Substance of the Father. And thus we Christians have but *One God*, who in the way of Oeconomy governs his Family by the Ministry of an Inferior: and but *One Lord*, who by this Oeconomy manages the same Family in the Name of his Superior.

There's a Tract among St. Austin's

Works, (intitul'd, *De eo quod dictum est, Ego sum qui sum*) which admirably well explains this matter, without that mixture of *Platonism* that *Lactantius* and *Tertullian* have, in Passages hereafter cited. "They, says that Author (making himself one of them, who would have it to be an Angel, that call'd himself *Jehova*) ought to give us a reason why he calls himself so. They answer, that as 'tis said in the Scripture, that the Lord spoke, when the Prophet spoke, not that the Prophet was the Lord, but because the Lord was in the Prophet: So when the Lord vouchsafes to speak by an Angel, as by a Prophet or an Apostle, this Angel may very well be called an Angel upon his own account, and the Lord with respect to God dwelling in him.—The same who speaks in the Man, speaks in the Angel; wherefore the Angel of God who appeared to Moses, said, *I am what I am*. This is not the Voice of the Temple, *as he may be called*, but of him who dwelt in it. Afterwards, he having shewn, that the Apparitions of Angels in the Old Testament, cannot be understand of Jesus Christ, he adds, *I suppose we shall understand this matter better, by laying, that our Fathers own'd the Lord that it was, in the Angels, or the Being who dwelt in those whom he employ'd; and so give Glory to the Lord who was personated by the Angels, and not to the Angels who did personate him.* This Truth, says he, is confirm'd by the Epistle to the Hebrews, where 'tis said, *the Word spoke by Angels*—whereby the Apostle teaches us, that they were Angels who spoke, but that God was heard and honoured, in the Angels. We are told the same truth in the Acts of the Apostles, where St. Stephen reproving the Jews, says to 'em, *Ye stiff-necked, &c. who received the Law by the disposition of Angels, and have not kept it.* If Stephen had said, *of an Angel*, and not, *of Angels*, there would

" would be no need of saying farther,  
" this is Jesus Christ, who is call'd the  
" Angel of Great Counsel. Call him one  
" Angel as much as you please, but can  
" one call him Angels? — 'Twas there-  
" fore One Angel, and the Lord in that  
" Angel, who said to Moses that ask'd  
" his Name, *I am what I am.*

There are the same Proofs and Arguments in St. Austin's 3d Book de Trinit. who observes, " That 'twas said [An-  
" gels] and not [one Angel] in the  
" Singular; that it might not be said that  
" it was the Son of God. And putting  
to himself this Objection, " Why do we  
" read, *God said unto Moses*, and not the  
" Angel said unto Moses? He replys,  
" As we say, the Judge speaks when the  
" Crier publishes; the Lord said, when  
the Prophet spoke: So tho' the Angel  
spoke, the Word is ascrib'd to God,  
" who employ'd him.

The same Father arguing strongly against those who believ'd that Jesus Christ appeared to the ancient Patriarchs, by these Words, Lib. 16. cap. 29. de Christ. Dei. " God, says he, appeared to A-  
" braham in the Person of three Men,  
" that were without question three An-  
" gels, tho' some imagin'd that one of  
" em was Jesus Christ: But if Jesus  
" Christ be pretended to be one of the  
" three, because Abraham addresses him-  
" self to one of 'em; why is it not  
" minded, that the third who staid with  
" Abraham, is called Lord, and one of  
" the other two who came to Lot, is  
" call'd Lord too in the Singular, by the  
" Patriarch, when he makes answer to  
" the Lord, who was in the two Angels?  
" Therefore 'tis much more likely, that  
" Abraham understood the Lord to be in  
" the three Men, and that Lot thought  
" him present in the two. There's the  
same arguing to be met with in St. Au-  
" stin's Lib. 2. de Trinit. c. 12.

This Oeconomy of Angels, as you see,  
gives great light to the new Oeconomy of

Jesus Christ, and opens a way for our understanding it. For 'tis but to apply to this last Dispensation all that those Authors have said of the Angels, and we shall have a Key to understand the Passages of the New Testament, which speak of Jesus Christ as of God himself. We need say no more than this, that Jesus in himself was a Man, and a God with respect to God dwelling in him; So that the Man is not the Lord Jehovah, but the Lord is in the Man; and whatever Name he has, or Power he claims, 'tis not the Voice of the Temple, but of him who dwelt in it. In short, all that has been said of the Angel, may it not be said of the Man, except this, that there are two Natures in him? And if the Angel might assume the Names and Characters of Jehovah, without being concluded to be himself the Jehovah, why may not the like Names and Characters be given Christ, without concluding thence that he is the Supreme God? This Reflection links the great Objection of the Trithearians, their modish Argument, I had almost said; for 'tis the beaten Track of the modern Disputants. How strange must it be, say they, for the New Testament Writers, if they did not look upon Jesus Christ to be the Supreme God, to speak of him, as of God himself? Would those Holy Men have led us into so great an Error by their extravagant Forms of speaking, if it were not so? But this ambulatory way of dis-  
coursing is pure Declaration, and may be run'd with ease at a blow, by making 'em sensible, that if one refutes after their fashion upon the Conduct of the Writers of the Old Testament, who have spoken of an Angel as of God himself, one may prove to 'em in their own be-  
loved way, that *that Angel was the Supreme God.* But let 'em but once under-  
stand the Oeconomy, and they will for-  
bear to give us any further trouble in this particula.

THE  
SECOND PART  
OF  
*Platonism Unveil'd.*

C H A P. I.

*The Primitive Fathers deify'd Jesus Christ, or give him the Title of a God.*

**H**AD the Antients then no true Theology? Yes, without question, and we shall infallibly find it, if we ascend a little higher than the date of *Platonism*, which afterward reduced it to that miserable state wherein I am going to represent it. And I know not how it can be done better than in the Ideas of a Learned Trinitarian, who has spoke the truth in this matter before he was well aware. 'Tis Bp. Pearson I mean, in his *Vindication of Ignat. Epist. Part. 2. cap. 1.* where he tells you, "Ignatius was one of those [Primitive Fathers] qui Christum θεοῦ; that is, who deify'd Jesus Christ, or gave him the Title of a God; which was also done by the Catholick Doctors, and Christians of his time; who, as Pliny reports it, sang Hymns to Jesus Christ, as to a God: and who,

" as one of the Antients tells us, in Euseb. *Eccl. Hist. lib. 5. c. 28.* did celebrate the Praises of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, by ascribing to him Divinity. But after the Philosophy of Plato was received in the Church, the Writers of the second and third Century are not wont to speak of Jesus Christ with so much simplicity, as barely to call him God. This manner of speaking of Jesus Christ has the relish of St. Ignatius his time, who simply or barely call'd him God. Photinus reproaches Clemens Romanus, for not giving the Title of God to Jesus Christ, which so well became him. Hence it appears that this able Critick thought the Practice of giving Christ the Title of a God, was peculiar to this first Age of the Church. But the Title [God] so often given to Christ

" Christ by *Ignatius*, tho' not with the  
" resurrection with which 'tis done by the  
" succeeding Fathers, but simply and  
" by it self, is indeed a mark of the An-  
" tiquity of St. *Clemens* his Writings.  
" He imitates throughout the Epistles of  
" St. *Paul*, which had been received  
" from the beginning in all Churches;  
" but he rarely cites the Gospels, which  
" had been more lately received. He  
" has nothing in his Epistles of human  
" Learning, nothing that does not be-  
" come the Simplicity of an Apostolick  
" Man, and the Purity of the Gospel.  
" They who wrote after him usually bor-  
" row from the *Pagans*, and sometimes  
" blend their Opinions with the Chri-  
" stian Religion, which every one did,  
" according to the Principles of that  
" Philosophy they had imbib'd before  
" they embrac'd Christianity. *Ignatius*  
" had for a long time been a Bishop, and  
" became a Christian at a time when very  
" few of the Learned Gentiles turn'd  
" Christians; but we find him to be  
" purely the Christian, not form'd in the  
" Schools, or nur'sd up in Librarys, and  
" wthou't the Sentiments of the Acad-  
" my, or the *Portio*.

Bp *Pearce* acquaints us in this fine Pas-  
" sage, that the Antients did theologie  
(that is, attribute Divinity to) Jesus  
" Christ, and spoke of him as a God. This  
taken in a good Sense, very well explains  
what they understood by the title of a  
God, when they gave it to Jesus Christ.  
They meant nothing else by it, but this,  
that they look'd upon him as a *Divine*  
" and *extraordinary Man*, and that they ho-  
" nour'd him as such. In short, it would  
not be proper to say, that the Antients  
sang Hymns to the *Father* as to a God  
(*quasi Deo*) that they celebrated the Prai-  
ses of the *Father*, by ascribing Divinity to  
him, *Θεογόνοις*, deifying him; this  
would be ridiculous Language. We  
don't use to speak thus of the Supreme  
God. These Expressions cannot suit  
any other Object, but one, who has not  
Divinity in an absolute Sense, but in cer-

tain respects only. And 'tis upon the  
following accounts that Jesus Christ was  
spoken of as a God, either with regard  
to his *Nature*, being the Son of God,  
form'd by the Operation of his Spirit;  
or with regard to his *Dignity*, since that  
the *Father* by making him Lord and Christ,  
had made him God, as St. *Ambrose* reads  
this Passage (*Lib. 1. de fide ad Grat.*  
*Aug. Cap. 7.*) Tis true, this Term  
[Θεογόνοις] in another sense is sometimes  
us'd with respect to God the Father;  
but then it signifies nothing else, but to  
speak with reverence of the Deity, to  
celebrate his Praises, and not to deify, or  
ascribe Divinity to him. *Vide Euseb. Hist.*  
*Eccles. lib. 10. cap. 3.* In the first of  
the Senses abovementioned, the term  
may be well applied to Jesus Christ, to  
expres the Divine Honours they gave  
him. For if he was Man, because a  
Woman was his Mother, it might also  
be said, that he was a God, and a God  
by Nature; for being born of a Virgin,  
he had none other Father but God (*Natu-  
ra a nascendo*.) But he deserves this  
high Character yet further, forasmuch as  
the Father has highly exalted him, and  
given him a Name above every Name.  
By this Name, says *Novatian de Trinit.*  
*cap. 17.* we understand nothing else but  
the Name of God. Because he was faith-  
ful, says *Lactantius. Institut. lib. 4. cap.*  
14, and had exactly done the Will of his  
Father, he received the Name (or Title)  
of God. Tis in this sense, that the Au-  
thor of the second Epistle ascrib'd to  
*Clemens Romanus*, exhorts us to think of  
Christ *as of a God* (*as πρεσβυτέρος*) and he  
explains that by subjoining, as of the *Judg* of  
*Quick and Dead*. Shewing us thereby, that  
he gave him not that Name, but with re-  
gard to the Power the Father bestowed  
upon him, for his Obedience.

This is the very Theology of St. *Paul*,  
*Heb. 1.* who tells us, that God made  
Christ more excellent than the Angels, when  
he said to him,  *thou art my Son*, that is  
plainly, that then he made him a God:  
For 'tis of his Exaltation the Apostle  
speaks,

Speaks, as appears by his Citation out of the Psalms, *O God, thy God has anointed thee;* for so I read it, as the Trinitarians do. Now a God anointed and consecrated, is nothing but a King; and consequently Jesus Christ is God with regard to the Dominion he has received from the Father over the New Creation. But with respect to *God the Father*, he is nothing but the Minister of his Will. If he be called Lord, that's no more than a Term of Inferiority in the New Testament, which signifies one whom the Father hath appointed his Vicegerent; and it cannot be understood otherwise, because 'tis said, *the Father has made him Lord.* St. Paul easily follows this Sense; for in all the Symbols he mentions, he takes care to ascribe the Name of God only to the Father, excluding the Son, and saying, the Father is the One God, and the Son the One Lord; which St. Paul does always, when he speaks of Father and Son together. And this is an Observation I had from Tertullian, who speaks thus in his Dispute against Præxæs: "I will not say two Gods and two Lords, but I will follow the Apostle St. Paul; and if the Father and the Son are to be nam'd together, I'll call the Father God, and Jesus Christ Lord. But if Jesus Christ be named alone, then I may call him God, as the Apostle himself does, when he says, *Of whom is Christ, who is God over all things, blessed for ever.* But in my opinion Novatian expresses the thing more clearly in his Discourse de Trinitate, cap. ult. "God the Father,

says he, is without contradiction the God of all, and the very Principle of his Son, whom he has made Lord. But the Son is the God of all the Creatures, because God the Father has set him at their Head, when he made him Lord. Whence it follows that Jesus Christ may well be called God, when you consider him at the head of the New Creation, which God has subjected to his Dominion. But this Title vanishes, when the Apostle St. Paul is speaking of the Father and the Son together; then the Son can have no other Character but what is fully signified and explain'd in the Notion of God's Minister and Ambassador. So true is it, that before the only True and Supreme God, every other Deity must fall down, and disappear. So that Bp Pearson had reason to say, that Ignatius imitates St. Paul; for he says in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that Jesus Christ was made God in the Flesh; which can signify no more than that a Man was raised to Divine Power or Divinity. Moreover, Ignatius gives Jesus Christ the Title of [God] without any of those Additions, which the Fathers after him make use of. He does not call Christ, in the Platonic Style, *God the Word, a God begotten, God of God.* But if it should be said, Ignatius has not used the Restrictions of St. Paul, and that he calls Christ God simply and absolutely; this is not true, for he calls him a God made, or *an<sup>r</sup> God*, to shew, that he is not so, but with regard to the Power he received of his Father, and exercises over us.

## C H A P. II.

*The first Fathers did not theologize Jesus Christ (i. e. ascribe Divinity to him) in the Sense and Terms of the Platonic Fathers, who lived in after Ages, but merely on the account of his miraculous Birth and Exaltation.*

THAT the most Primitive Fathers gave the Title of God to J. C. in the sense I am about to explain, will appear for three Reasons, which amount almost to Demonstration. My first Reason is taken from the manner, wherein *Clem. Rom.* and *Polycarp* speak of J. C. *Photius* says, that *Clement* has given our Saviour the Stile of High Priest, but reproaches him for not giving Christ the Characters of a God. Is it possible that *Clement* has done J. C. so great an Injury, as not to give him the Character he merits? By no means. *Photius* is mistaken, and 'tis contrary to all reason to imagine so considerable an Omission can be found in a Letter, wherein the Church at *Rome* (as *Irenaeus* tells us, *lib. 3. c. 2.*) delivers to the Church of *Corinth*, the Tradition she had received from the Apostles. It must be said therefore that this great Critick [*Photius*] did not take notice, that in the Apostolic Stile of *St. Clement*, the calling J. C. our High Priest and Pontif is the same thing, as to call him our God; agreeable to the Doctrine of *St. Paul*, who teaches us, that when God rais'd his *Messias* to the Honour of the High Priesthood, 'twas then he said unto him, *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.* So that there's nothing in my Opinion more reasonable and just, than the Remark of *Grotius, Epist. 347. Par. 2.* who proves the Antiquity of this Epistle of *St. Clement* for this very reason, because it does not speak of J. C. in the Platonic

Way and Manner, as was done by others in alter Ages, but in a Simplicity or Plainness, altogether as *St. Paul* had spoken.

As to *St. Polycarp*, one finds in his Epistle the same Character of Simplicity and Plainness, as in *St. Clement* aforesaid, which *Photius* takes notice of in the place forecited. And *St. Irenaeus, l. 3. c. 3.* gives *Polycarp's* Epistle this fair Character, *That 'tis a most compleat and very proper Instruction in the Faith, and Doctrine of Truth.* Yet one meets with no Platonic Titles in this excellent Epistle. In vain will you look for those Phrases, the [Eternal] Word, the Pre-existence of the Son of God, the Generation from the Womb of the Father, &c. Nay you will not find in this Epistle, so much as the Name of God applied to Christ. Where then, with respect to Christ, are *Polycarp's* Characters of the true Faith and Doctrine? Why they are in those Elogies, which *Polycarp* often repeats, as that *Jesus Christ is the everlasting High Priest, that he is the Son of God, that the Father hath rais'd him from the Dead, and made him to sit at his right Hand.* For pray observe *St. Polycarp's* Creed of the Divinity of the Father and the Son: "To pass over (says he) the Mistake and Babble of some Persons; let us believe in him who rais'd our Lord Jesus Christ from the Dead, and hath crowned him with Glory, &c. Let us keep our selves clear of the vain and false Doctrine of those Persons afore-

" said, and keep close to the antient Tradition and Word, which was left us from the beginning. In which Passage this Holy Person, being willing to put the *Philippians* in mind of the vain Discourse of some, and to guide 'em to the source of true Tradition, which he makes to consist in believing J. C. was deified by his Father, he meant no doubt to bring them off from the vain Philosophy of *Plato's Second God*, and to engage them to that Divinity of J. C. which is founded on his Exaltation. For 'tis clear that *Polyarp* calls here by the Name of true and ancient Tradition, this summary of the Faith expressed in these Terms, *Believe ye in him who hath raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the Dead, &c.* This Symbol is agreeable to that of the Apostles, and is directly opposite to that vain Doctrine he was about to condemn. And this Symbol inferring upon nothing but the Glory J. C. acquired by his Sufferings, it must necessarily follow, that under the Name of Babble or vain Doctrine, St. *Polyarp* censures that vain and false Glory, which *Platonizing* Christians ascribed to Christ by their fancied Pre-existence. In short, instead of that unintelligible Babble of other Fathers, and I know not what Jargon, of a Son of God begotten before all Ages, and emanated from the Divine Mind, which is exactly the reverse of the Gospel; *Polyarp* here speaks of none other Son of God, but one who is an everlasting High Priest, rais'd to a Sovereign Glory; which is the real Gospel, the Tradition of the Apostles, and the antient Theology.

My second Proof is drawn from the Confession of the antient Martyrs; there can be no doubt but that those faithful Witnesses of J. C. gave his Person the most illustrious and most honourable Testimony that they could, and that they heighten'd their Theology as far as they could, without the hazard of their Faith. Let us hear therefore what is said of 'em in the Acts of those Martyrs:

St. *Polyarp* invokes a Trinity, but what Trinity? three Persons and one God, as 'tis expressed, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost? God forbid. He, as *Euseb.* tells us, *Hist. lib. 4. c. 16.* invoked God the Father thro his Everlasting High Priest, *Jesus Christ our Lord, in the Holy Spirit.* Who sees not that he gave Glory to J. C. and that he deified him, by styling him the everlasting High Priest? If he could have said any thing greater, he would have said it.

*Rufius Praefect of Rome*, demanded of *Justin Martyr* what was the Christian Religion. This Confessor answered, "We believe one only God, who is the Creator of all things visible and invisible; and we confess that J. C. our Lord is the Son of God, foretold by the Prophets, and who shall come one day to judg the World. Observe here such a Son of God, whose whole Pre-existence consists in his being foretold by the Prophets, and whose real Greatness is not, his having created, but because he will judg the World. This Creed is Apostolic, and has the Air and Simplicity of the first Ages. One may dextrously philosophize upon the Christian Religion, and speak in the *Platonic* way in ones Cloister, as *Justin* has often done: but when he was to make a sincere Confession before the Magistrate, and to seal it with his own Blood, *Plato* has nothing to do with it, the Confession is made with Simplicity and in conformity to the Holy Scriptures: then 'tis no longer *Justin the Philosopher*, but *Justin the Confessor* and the *Martyr*.

Lastly *Hegeippus* acquaints us, in *Euseb. Ecclesi. Hist. lib. 2. c. 23.* that James the Just being conjur'd by the Jews, to declare to them what he thought of Jesus: "Why, says he, do you put this Question to me concerning Jesus the Son of Man? He sits in Heaven at the Right Hand of the Power of God, and he must come again in the Clouds of Heaven. This Holy Man, says the *Histo-*

*Historian*, was a witness very credible both with *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that Jesus was really the Christ. His Confession is not long, however it comprehends that which may be said to be the most august and considerable, and confirms all the Theology which concerns the Persons of Christ.

To these Testimonies of ancient Martyrs, give me leave to add another Instance, which is not much from the purpose. *Eusebius* tells us in his *Eccles. Hist. lib. 1. c. 13.* "That *Thaddeus* going to see King *Agbarus*, he preached to the King J. C. our Lord and our God, the *Melissas*, or the Sent of God. *Valesius* remarks in his Notes, that the Word [God] is wanting in good Copies, which are in other Passages confirmed by *Nicæphorus* and *Rufinus*: "And I don't think, says Mons. *Valois*, any one dares deny, but that the Reading, wherein the Word God is wanting, is more agreeable to the Text: For if the Antients us'd not that Word but of the Father only. alij. If *Thaddeus* speaking to a King, who was a new Convert to and weak in the Faith, had call'd J. C. God, this might have perplexed him, and made him to think that two Gods were preached to him.

'Tis plain and fair dealing to affirm, the Antients by no means gave the Name of God to J. C. but 'tis mincing to say that they did it not in the case of weak Christians, this is a mere Evasion. For why was not the like Tenderness us'd towards others in the following Ages? Is it because there was less danger of spreading *Polytheism*? Were not the *Catechumens* both weak and Novices too, whom the *Pantanusses*, the *Clementines* *Alexandrinusses*, the *Origenes*, and the *Cyrils* taught the second God of *Plato*, with

all the Niceties of the mystic Theology?

Be that as it will, it appears from this Passage and many others, that one has not good ground to trust much to the Testimonies of the Antients, where the Name of God is given to J. C. The Word God has been inserted in such Places by *Trinitarian Copists*, and without doubt many other Terms have been retrench'd, as they thought fit. What an Abyss of Uncertainty is here then! Besides, Mons. *Du Pin* believes this History of *Thaddeus* to be fabulous (*See his Bibliothe. Tom. 1. p. 1.*) *Eusebius* has amass'd all sorts of Memoirs without much Judgment: He often misunderstands the Authors he cites, sometimes he corrupts them to reconcile them to the *Arian Scheme*. What endless Uncertainties must this occasion! Mons. *Valois* himself falls under the same Guilt he taxes in others; and we must not only be upon our Guard against the Fraud of *Copists*, but of *Translators* too. Observe how he reads the Text, in the eleventh Chapter of the eighth Book of *Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* "The Martyrs of *Pbyrgia*, as he makes the Historian word it, call led upon Jesus Christ, who is God over all. Now these Words [God over all] are not found in the Greek of *Christopherson*, nor in the Latin Version of *Rufinus*, nor in *Cousin's French Version*. And *Valois* takes no notice whence he had this Reading, which in other Places is so contrary to the Doctrine of *Eusebius* himself, and to other Invocations to be met with in great Numbers in his History: the ordinary Form thereof is, to invoke him, who is God over all, by or through J. C. our Lord; and in short is contrary to the Usage and constant Practice of the Primitive Church, as we are going to shew in our third Proof.

## C H A P. III.

*A Continuation of the Proofs; that the first Fathers did not deify Christ upon any other account, but that of his miraculous Birth and Exaltation.*

I Affirm in the third Place, that the Antients grounded their Deification of J. C. upon nothing beyond his being born of a Virgin, and his Exaltation in the highest Heavens ; and that for this decisive Reason, because they held all those were Hereticks, who gave J. C. the Title of God over all. To this purpose speaks the Author of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, lib. 6. c. 26. " There are some, says he, who have the Impiety, or are so impious as to say, that *J. C.* is God over all ; fancying that he is the Father himself, and at the same time both Son and Paraclet. Can any thing be conceived more execrable ? Upon this Passage Mons. Daille in his *Pseudepigr. Apost.* blesses himself, and says, Then was St. Paul an Heretick, and the whole Church is heretical, which constantly maintain'd against the *Arians*, that J. C. was God over all. So that heretofore 'twas Heresy to affirm J. C. to be God over all, tho now-a-days 'tis Orthodoxy. But that Christ was the Father himself, and the Son and Paraclet too, is a consequence drawn from their Doctrine, which they rejected without doubt, as 'tis disfavoured by others in these days. The distinction of Persons was not then in fashion, which is nothing but three different Names for the same thing, as that word is now understood. For it must signify with some nothing but a *Mode*, a Relation, a *nescis quid*, which are words that signify nothing less than what we commonly call a Person. Wherefore if the consequence above be good a-

gainst the antient Hereticks, 'tis e'en as good against the modern *Sabellians*.

After the Author of the *Constitutions* I place *Ignatius*, who in his Epistle to those of *Tarsus*, calls those Hereticks Ministers of Satan, who held these two extremes ; the one, that J. C. is God over all ; the other, that he was but a mere Man. In his Epistle to the *Philippians*, he explains wherein Orthodoxy truly consists, viz. in believing Christ born of God by a Virgin ; for not only they who believed him a mere Man, denied this Truth, but *Ignatius* farther insinuates, that this Truth was denied no less even by such, who believed him to be God over all. " How, says he to them, do you not believe that J. C. was born of a Virgin, but that he is God over all, I would say, him who can doall things ? Tell me then I pray, who is he that sent him ? To whose Will is he subject ? And whose Law did he fulfil ? How dare you maintain that the Christ was by no means generated, that the Lawgiver is unbegotten, and that he who is without beginning was nail'd to a Cross ? This Passage is the clearest Proof. The Generation of J. C. by the Power of the Holy Ghost, was the true Theology concerning his Person ; and those who held him to be the Supreme God, contested this miraculous Generation, pretending that he was unbegotten. For this reason *Ignatius* adds a little after, " This is not he who is God over all, but the Son, meaning thereby, one who was begotten ten.

" ten. Daille exclaims upon the Passage aforesaid, saying, " Ignatius distinguishes the Son from that God who is over all, which is Blasphemy. And he has reason (to speak in the Orthodox way) because the Character of a God over all, is not properly of the Person, but an Attribute of the Substance. So that it cannot be taken from J. C. without robbing him of the Divine Nature and Substance.

It will be said perhaps, that the Constitutions are not Clement's, and that the two Epistles under the Name of Ignatius are falsely ascribed to him. But this is trifling as to our Question; for be it as it will, my Citations are from Authors of great Antiquity, and who pass for Trinitarians: they are Witnesses of the Faith in that Age wherein they lived, and whose Testimony consequently ought not to be suspected by us Moderns. So much the rather, because the same is confirmed by a Doctor of great Name and Reputation. For is it not well known, that Origen attacked the same Error, in his 32 Tom. on St. John, and in his eighth Book against Celsus? Mons. Huet in his *Quæstiones Origen.* 2. is much scandalized, that Origen should say, " Some maintained that Christ was God over all; This Proposition, saith Huet, is true and Orthodox, with respect to the Divine, not the Human Nature. Origen on the contrary, denies our Saviour to be God over all, and proves him to be inferior to the Father by this Reason, because the Father is God over all. He takes away then from the Divine Nature of J. C. the Character of supreme Divinity, and ascribes it to the Father. But let us hear Origen

himself: " I mean, says he, that there are some among the great Number of Believers, who widely differing from the Opinion of others, rashly maintain that our Saviour is God over all: for our parts we have no regard for that Opinion, believing these Words of our Saviour himself, viz. *The Father who sent me is greater than I.* 'Tis trifling to answer here, that Origen meant some Heretics, who held that J. C. was the Father. This takes not off from the Force of the Argument; for Origen maintains, that the Son is not the Father, for this reason, because he is not as the Father, God over all; and because Christ himself confesses, that the Father is greater than himself, supposing that it was the Father alone who had this supreme Prerogative.

To conclude, Dr. Bull in his *Judicium Eccl. Cath.* and his *Defender* in his *Fathers vindicated*, citing the famous Passage of Justin, when that Father consents to a Toleration of the Josephites (who believed Jesus to be the Son of Joseph, yet nevertheless believed him to be Christ) These Authors, I say, insist much upon the opposition which Justin Martyr makes between τινες and πλειστοι, i.e. the small number of Josephites, and the many who oppos'd 'em. Now we have our Turn to boast in this Passage of Origen, and may take the same Advantage; they who believed J. C. to be God over all, were but the τινες, or some Persons; and by consequence they were the Heretics, because the few are always such. But for those who opposed this Error, they beyond contradiction were the Orthodox, because they were the πλειστοι, i.e. the Multitude.

## C H A P IV.

*General Remarks upon the forecited Authorities of the Fathers;*

**I**T remains that I make two Remarks upon these Passages in general; one is, that since 'twas Heresy in these first times of Christianity, to affirm that J. C. is the supreme God; it follows that Orthodoxy was either the Opinion of *Arius*, which will not be granted, or that of the *Socinians*, which ought to be admitted, since 'tis taken from the Scriptures, by the Confession of the *Trinitarians*.

The other Remark is, since such Fathers condemn this Expression as heretical, *viz.* that the Lord Jesus is God over all, without taking any notice of the Objection now drawn from that Passage in *Rom. 9. 5.* which one wou'd think was very natural for them to have solv'd; it follows that in their time either they gave those Words another sense, or that they read it otherwise than we do at this day.

Supposing then, as I am about to demonstrate, that to ascribe to J. C. the Prerogative of the Father, *viz.* of being God over all, was Heresy in the first Ages of the Church; One sees clearly in what sense a Remark of *Sulpitius Severus* may be true, which was this, that almost all Christians in *Palestine* in the time of *Adrian*, believed Jesus Christ to be a God. Not the supreme God, as *Sulpitius* pretends, nor a God begotten a little before the Creation, as *Eusebius* would have us believe, by perverting some Passages of the *Antients*, and by making them to serve his own Prejudices. Not, I say once more, the supreme God; this would have been a damnable Error. What then? Why a God, because he was received or owned not only

as a Just Man and a Prophet, but as the Christ of God, whom he made Lord, giving him a Name above every Name, the Name of God. Note here the manner of Christ's Deification. In short, one cannot believe without Heresy, according to these Primitive Doctors, that he was a mere Man, having no more Authority than other Holy Persons. One cannot therefore better state the Orthodoxy of those venerable Doctors, than in avoiding these two Extremes. And we find it to be so, in the most famous and most ancient Monument of the Christian Church, I mean the Apostles Creed, which says, I believe in J. C. the only Son [of God] our Lord; how I pray is he God's only Son? Why that's explain'd in these Words, he was conceiv'd by the Holy Ghost, and born of a Virgin, his miraculous Generation and Nativity made him a God; and how he became our Lord, appears in these Words, he was raised from the Dead and ascended into Heaven, whence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead; his Obedience and his illustrious Virtue rais'd him to this supreme Dignity. These two Articles make up the whole of the ancient Theology, with respect to the Person of Christ; but the latter of the two without dispute was the most important, and is only insisted on for our Salvation. J. C. never preach'd to the Jews his miraculous Birth, but he always prov'd his Mission from Heaven by Miracles wrought publicly and openly. The Apostles in the History we have of their first Sermons, have spoken nothing more; they insist not on any other Topic concerning their Divine Master, but those

those of his Resurrection and Exaltation. St. Paul lost his Life for preaching that last Mystery. But in how many Passages does he press, as essential and necessary to Salvation, the Belief of Christ's Exaltation? If thou confessest with thy Mouth, that Jesus is the Lord; and believest with thy Heart, that God hath rais'd him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved, Rom. 10. 9.

The earliest Antiquity was of the same Judgment, as it appears by two Instances: The first is that of *Vitor Bp of Rome*, who excommunicated *Theodosius*, altho he believed J. C. was born of a Virgin by the Holy Spirit, because (as is remarked by the Author of a Catalogue of Heresies, suppos'd to be *Tertullian*) *Theodosius* believed Christ to be mere Man, who had no other Advantage or Prerogative above other Men, but what he had from his own Righteousness. This is plainly to say, that tho' he believed him a Man extraordinary in his Birth and his Virtue, yet he did not therefore believe him to be that Christ and that Lord, whom the Father had rais'd above all other Men, and even above Angels; whereby *Theodosius* rejected a fundamental Article of Christianity.

The other Instance is that of *Justin Martyr*, in his Dialogue with *Trypho*. He there owns for his Brethren, that there were some Christians of his time, who held for a Truth that J. C. was but a mere Man, the Son of *Joseph* and *Mary*, but however believed him to be the Christ: which plainly intimates, that they did not look upon him barely as a Prophet, who only preached Righteousness to the Jews; but besides, they thought him to be the *Messias* sent to all Nations, and the Lord whom God had made such over all Men; and in this they retain'd the fundamental Article of Christianity.

After this Opinions changed, as Pearson beforecited has remarked: " Those, " says he, who wrote just after the purer Ages of the Church, borrowed the

" Sentiments of the Pagans, and mingled them with the Christian Religion" following those Principles of Philosophy, which they had imbibed before they embraced the Christian Religion. That was the source of the ensuing Evils; the Exaltation of our Saviour, which had been esteem'd the chief point in Christianity, as we have seen in the Writings of *Polycarp* and *Clement*, was no longer regarded as such: But his miraculous Birth was the only Article insisted upon. The Reason whereof is plainly this, that in their Disputes with the Philosophers, they did not so much insist upon the High Offices of the *Messias*, as upon the Excellency of his Nature and Person; for they wanted a Parallel with the emanated Word of the Philosophers. And indeed this miraculous Birth was much more suitable to the Principles of *Plato's Philosophy*, which enter'd into the Christian Religion, upon the Conversion of some Learned Men. An holy Spirit coming down from Heaven upon a Virgin, and begetting in her that holy Man, who from that is stiled the Son of God: An Event, I say, so extraordinary as this, was without doubt the most proper thing in all that Gospel, to serve for a Foundation of the *Platonic Doctrine*; 'twas easy, with a little philosophic Dexterity, to find in it the second God, the begotten Son, the Son of God, the Word, the Mind or Understanding; and in one word, the whole Train of the Platonic Preexistence.

*Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr* and *Irenaeus* began with an Accommodation of these Terms more or less. You may see in their Writings, not that naked downright *Platonism*, as one sees in *Origen* for example, and *Clemens Alexandrinus*; but *Platonism* in disguise, which appeared in the Mask of Christian Religion. *Plato's Logos* or Word, and the Holy Spirit which overshadowed the Virgin *Mary*, always keep company in their Writings. For this Passage in St. Luke [The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee; &c.] one shall

shall meet with blended throughout with their starch'd and most affected Speculations. The Platonic Opinion did not enter all at once into Christianity, which then would have been sensible of the Innovation, but crept in by little and little, under the Mask of *Explication* and *Illustration*. Any change in the Christian Religion was not intended heresy, but to set it off to the best advantage, and make it fit for the reign of the Philosophers. And hereupon they went on philosophizing upon a point inconceivably Christian, viz. upon the Sovereign Power that sordid the Body wherein Jesus dwelt, till they quite lost the sight of it. The Philosophers could not endure that so plain a Doctrine as that of J. C. should pretend to combat their Notions. They always twitted the Christians with the Unskillfulness, Coarseness and Ignorance of their Writers. The Christians, ashamed of this Reproach, endeavour'd to obviate it. Some coming fresh from the Pagan Schools, made a show of their Learning, and mingled it with the Christian Doctrine. Others applied themselves so well to human Learning, to Rhetorick and Philosophy, that they excelled and raised the Pagans, but at the expence of the Christian Religion, the Simplicity of which they alter'd.

I say, to obviate the Reproach aforesaid, they made use of two Expedients : first they dress'd up supposititious Pieces, containing the most subtle and most refin'd Philosophy ; and publish'd them under the Names of *Dionysius the Areopagite*, *Clemens Romanus*, and many others. To make it appear that the first Preachers of Christianity were not so illiterate as was supposed, this very Observation is made even by Mons. *D'alete* and Dr. *Caze*. Yet those spurious Pieces, published for the Credit of the pretended Authors among the Pagans, under great Names, had this effect besides, that they adulterated the Christian Religion. In the second place, those platonizing Doctors barraged the Simplicity of the Gospel

by their Allegories, and other Helps to Contemplation, to heighten the Christian Doctrine by sublime Terms and profound Notions. Thus by the force of a philosophic Management, of the Doctrine of the Generation of the Son of God by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, this Point at last was changed into that of a Generation of *Plato's Word or Logos*. To pass for the present the consideration of those Objections, pretended to have great weight, which are taken from the supposed Impossibility of a change in the Tradition of the Church, as the *Author of the Fathers vindicated* argues ; I must tell him, 'tis in vain for him to attack us with those very Weapons, with which he has already been beaten in France. We will make our Defence at the same rate he has done his on another occasion. *Justin Martyr*, if you please, shall not be the very Innovator, who changed the Tradition of the Church all at once ; 'tis not in that manner Error is equally introduc'd, that's agreed. But you must own, whether you will or nor, that *Justin* was the first who brought in the new Mode of expressing himself in matters of Faith, the first who made use of a Style that was strange and unknown to his Predecessors, *Clemens*, *Barnabas*, *Hermas*, and *Polycarp* ; and who spoke a philosophic Jargon, wherein appears throout the swelling Notions and Expressions of *Plato*, and nothing of the Simplicity of J. C. But to what purpose was this new Language ? unless it was to begin the Innovation, under colour of *Embellishing*, of *Accommodation*, and more ample *Explication* ; and that this was for prudential Reasons, and for the purpose of the Divine Economy. This is the very way that Error has always taken. The Doctrine of *Mahomet*, which establish'd it self by force, was indeed made, and introduced all at once by one Man alone : But the Doctrine of Antichrist took time, and came in by degrees ; it began with the Imposture and Finerelies of Philosophy, and us'd no Force nor

Violence, till by its Seductions it had gain'd the upper hand. *Justin Martyr* at first employ'd his Philosophy in the Cause, and Pope *Vigil* afterwards his Tyranny :

and thus you see how the Innovation was compleated; it came in, as the Proverb has it, like a Fox, and reign'd like a Lion.

## C H A P. V.

*Further Reflections upon the forementioned Passage in Bp Pearson's Vindication of Ignatius, Part 2. c. 1.*

Hitherto I have considered this remarkable Passage in Bp Pearson, only with regard to this particular design, which was to shew in what sense Jesus Christ was deify'd, or spoken of as a God among the first Christians. I have yet three further Reflections, which have a more general aspect upon the whole extent of this Controversy.

## 1st Remark.

My 1<sup>st</sup> Remark is upon the Passage in *Pliny* concerning the Worship of the ancient Christians, who, as he relates it, sang Hymns to Jesus Christ, as to a God. Now here I say, that *Pliny* speaks of the Christians in his *Pagan Stile*; that 'tis the Language of an Idolater, so that the least consequence cannot be drawn for the Divinity of Jesus Christ in the modern Sense of it; for he speaks after the same manner of Christ, as if he had been to speak of his Deify'd Heroes. See *Biblioth. Univ. Tom. 10. p. 346, 347.* Mons. *Le Clerc* has well observ'd in his *Rules of Criticism*, that all sorts of Authors are wont to express the Sentiments and Behaviour of the Persons whose History they write, in terms current and received, at the time of their writing, and in the Country where they liv'd: And that, if this be not well minded, one may easily mistake the Phrase of one Country for another, and confound their Meaning.

## 2d Remark.

Bp Pearson pretends it was customary in the first Age to call Jesus Christ God. Monsieur *Valois* maintains on the contra-

ry, that the Antients did not usually ascribe that Name but to the Father only. 'Tis not difficult to determine which of these two Critics was in the right. Pearson's Remark has no other ground but the Stile of *Ignatius* alone, which is the very thing in question: Whereas *Valesius* his Observatio is founded upon the constant Usage of the Fathers in the first Century, viz. *Clemens, Barnabas, Hermas* and *Polycarp*, who most certainly have never given the Name of God to Jesus Christ in the Writings which are incontestably theirs. So that since *Ignatius* has done otherwise, supposing the Epistles are truly his, it must be said, according to *Valesius* his Observation, that *Ignatius* did vary from the Practice in his time; or that the word [God] has been foisted in by the Copists, as the History of *Thaddaeus*.

## 3d Remark.

My last Remark is of much greater importance than the two former, and entirely decisive in this Controversy: For in this Passage of Bp Pearson you may take notice, that what he affirms will effectually and at once defend all kinds of Unitarian Heretics, from the formidable Authority of the *Platonizing Fathers*, with which they are always baited. The Fathers who wrote after *Ignatius*, says Pearson, the Doctors of the 2<sup>d</sup> and 3<sup>d</sup> Century, are used to borrow their thoughts fr. the Pagans, and sometimes to blend 'em with the Christian Religion. Take notice that al this is said with regard to

Jesus Christ; and remember too that the second Century is the fatal Epoch, wherein the Church lost the Purity and Simplicity of her Principles; which happened, as *Hegesippus* observes, soon after the Death of the Apostles, when *Platonism* prevail'd. To come to matter of Fact, the Fathers of the first and second Century, namely, the *Jujins*, the *Ithe-nagorasses*, the *Theophilusses*, the *Irenaeusses*, the *Clemens Alexandrinusser*, the *Textullians*, the *Origen*, &c. these Fathers, who wrote after *Ignatius*, have mingled Pagan Notions with the Christian Religion: therefore those Fathers ought not to be heard in this Controversy, as good Witnesses of the Christian Faith; and

as to the point of Christ's Divinity, ought to be regarded as Deny-Pagans. The *Unitarian Hereticks* likewise ought not in reason to be attack'd with their Authority: and consequently the Notion of Christ's Divinity ought to be reduc'd to the state and account given of it by the Writers of the first Century, who were not form'd in the Schools, nor bred up in Libraries, who were not imbû'd with the Sentiments of the *Academy* or the *Portico*. In fine, every Sentence and Expression in their Writings that regards Christ's Divinity, and has not the Purity and Simplicity of the first Century, cannot be look'd upon as any other but as a snatch of *Paganism*.

## C H A P. VI.

*The Theology concerning the Word (or Logos) is nothing else but a Philosophick Speculation, partly grounded upon the Divine Power that enter'd and dwelt in the Messiah at the moment of his Conception.*

To prove this, that the Theology concerning the Word (or *Logos*) is nothing else but a philosophick Notion, partly grounded upon the Divine Power that enter'd and dwelt in the Messiah at the moment of his Conception, there's nothing more to be consider'd, than, 1st. That the most antiens Authors go no further in search after Christ's Divinity, than his Birth of a Virgin. *Ignatius*, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, satisfies us of this Truth. "There is, says he, but one Physician, who is of Flesh and of Spirit, begotten and unbegotten, made a God in the Flesh, the true Life in Death, born of *Mary* and of God. This Father arguing against the *Josephites*, does not oppose to their Error the eternal Generation of the Son of God, but his Birth of a Virgin by the Holy Spirit. I would say, he does not speak of a *God incarnate*, but of a Man who was made

God in the Flesh, that is to say, who was born a God, or made a God by his Birth, because he was born of God, and of the Virgin *Mary*. In this Sense *Ignatius* assures us, that our Physician is partly Flesh, and partly Spirit; since by his wonderful Conception he partook equally of the fleshly [or Human,] and of the Spiritual and Divine Nature. He adds, this Physician is begotten, and unbegotten; since he was begotten of a Woman, like other Men; and at the same time unbegotten, having no Man for his Father. Lastly, he says, that this Physician was born of the Virgin *Mary*, and of God; which explains all the rest, for 'tis as much as to say, that he was born of the Virgin *Mary* by the Power of the Spirit of God, and not by her Intercourse with *Joseph*: This word [God,] as you may see, being there manifestly oppos'd to [Man,] or to [*Joseph*.] "Jesu Christ our God," as *Ignatius* further "says

" says in the same Epistle, was conceived of the Virgin Mary, according to the Divine Dispensation (εγένετο σύνεσθαι την Θεόν) being in truth of the Seed of David, but by the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Where one sees the same Antithesis continued, which we observ'd in the foregoing Passage; that is, between God and Mary, and between the Seed of David, and the Power of the Spirit. The true Economy, according to Ignatius, is not the Incarnation of the Supreme God, but the miraculous Conception of the Messiah, who is both God and Man, by his Birth of a Woman by the Power of God. This is a Physician, who was made God in the Flesh, being born of the Virgin Mary, and of God; of David, and of the Holy Spirit. This is the true Divine Dispensation, this is the great Mystery of the Christians.

The same Author, in his Epistle to the Church of Smyrna, presents us with another Passage suitable to this occasion: For thus he speaks of Jesus Christ, " That 't was truly of the Race of David (or the Son of David) according to the Flesh; but the Son of God, according to the Will and Power of God, in that he was truly born of a virgin. Monsieur Daillé having mark'd out this Passage of Ignatius as Heretical, since he makes the Generation of the Son to depend on the Will and Power of the Father; Bp Pearson gives this account of it in his *Vindic. Ignat.* Par. 2. c. 9. " That 'tis clear this Father does not speak of the Eternal Generation of the Son, but of his Incarnation, which, as the World owns, was by the Will and Power of God. For, which reason, adds Pearson, the Interpolator having a mind to pervert these Words by applying 'em to the Divine Nature, he was forc'd to change their Order. 'Tis sufficient, that this Learned Person affirms, that in this Passage there's nothing of an eternal Generation; and that Ignatius speaks not but of Jesus Christ,

in allusion to the Words of the Angel, *The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, &c. Wherefore that which, &c. shall be called the Son of God.* 'Tis enough that he owns, this Conception was so wonderful, as to intitle Jesus Christ to the Name and Dignity of the Son of God. As for the word [Incarnation,] which Ignatius does not use, we'll excuse it in Pearson; 'tis a Term of art unknown to the good Father, and signifies in the *Platonizing Divinity*, that the Supreme God was made Man. And if it be certain, that Ignatius did not speak in this Passage but of the miraculous Conception of Jesus Christ, can it be doubted whether he discours'd upon that same Subject, and by no means on the eternal Generation, in the two other Passages I am about to cite, and which are very like to this here? In the meantime Dr. Bull has the rashness to produce them for a Proof of that which he calls the two Natures of our Saviour; that is, that of a Supreme God, and that of a Man like one of us (in his *Judic. Eccl.* p. 5. & seq.) Who would not wonder at the Artifice of Divines, who have the Skill to pervert these Passages to serve their No ion of the Eternal Generation? We can furthermore shew you the Foot-steps of this plain ancient Divinity in other of the Fathers who Platonize more than Ignatius, as in Justin and Irenaeus. But we shall have another opportunity of examining the Theology of those two Fathers; at present the Passage in Ignatius will suffice, whereby to judg of the rest.

The only Reflection that remains, is, that Ignatius having so often distinguish'd between the Son born of God and of Mary, and the Son born of David and the Holy Spirit; 'tis upon this Foundation that the distinction of the two Natures in Christ, is founded in the true sense of it: or if you please, his twofold Initiation, the one Divine, the other Human. " He is the Son of God, says the Auth<sup>r</sup> of the *Questions and Answers to the Orthodox* (Quest. 65.) in that he

‘ was born of the Holy Spirit ; and the Son of Joseph, in that he was born of Joseph’s Wife. ‘ Tis in this the Mystery consists : He was born of Joseph’s Wife, this is but a legal Filiation with regard to Joseph ; and he was born of the Spirit of God, this is a proper and natural Filiation with respect to God. So that in this last respect, it may be said, that he is truly Light of Light, and God of God. I have already said it, and I’ll repeat it again : The Fathers thought that the Holy Spirit, which overshadowed the Virgin Mary, in some sort united it self to the Flesh of Jesus Christ, so as never to be separated from it ; and ‘tis upon this perpetual Inhabitation that they have philosophized in their manner, upon the two Natures of our Saviour. *Grotius* aim’d at this Theology in one of his Notes upon *Calof.* 1. 19. “ The Plenitude of Divine Verses, says he, dwelt in Jesus Christ ; that is to say, ‘twas perpetually and inseparably united, and not by instruments, as in the Prophets. This is what’s called the Hypostatic Union : This in effect, is the personal Union of the Divine with the Human Nature, even this Shekinah, or this perpetual Inhabitation of the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ. To go farther in quest of other Mysteries, betrays a Vanity of Mind. The Fathers compriz’d all in what I have said, and upon it they built those profound Speculations with which their Books are fill’d. If at some times they

went farther, and spoke of the Word in a manner not agreeable with the ground I have laid down, ‘tis because they have suffer’d themselves to be surpriz’d, and their eyes to be dazzled with their Platonic Philosophy. The Wonderful and the Sublime are very tempting Schemes. These Platonists are a sort of Philosophers, or rather of Divines, who have made a Voyage to the World of Ideas ; and some Christians are so weak as to swallow all their Visions for Mysteries. But let us always remember, for the honour of the Fathers, that how far ever they wander’d in their large Field of Platonic Contemplation, they never advanc’d so far as to equal the Divinity of the Word with that of his Father. *Origen*, who is one of them that went farthest, never carried his Theology to that extreme. Whatever lofty Idea he had of the Son, he declares however, in his 14th Tome on St. John, “ That the Son was so much below the Father, as he and the Holy Spirit were above the most noble Creatures. Go we now after this, and say, that the Fathers held the necessity of believing that the Supreme God was incarnate, and that Jesus Christ is that Supreme God. Monsieur *Huet* had good reason to acknowledg, upon this Passage of *Origen*, that it could not be excus’d ; and to attempt to find an Orthodox Sense in it, could not be consistent with Sincerity or Honesty.

## C H A P. VII

*The same Proof continued, together with an Examination of the Sense of Antient Creeds therupon.*

**W**E have no more to do, but to consider the antient Creeds, and to compare those which were form’d upon the Apostolick Theology, with such as were fram’d according to the Platonic

Scheme ; and we shall find in these latter, that the Article of the Generation of the Word, and of his Incarnation, came in the room of that of the Conception of the Son of God, which is found in the former

mer Creeds. "The univerſal Church," says Irenaeus (*lib. 1. cap. 2.*) hath received this Faith from the Holy Apostles, which is, to believe in one God the Father, &c. and in Jesus Christ his only Son, incarnate for our Salvation, &c. There's nothing in this Confession of the Faith of the Catholic Church, which is not in the very Creed of the Apostles, excepting the word [*Incarnate.*] But 'tis clear that it stands in the very place of those other words, [*conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*] which are wanting in this Creed of *Irenaeus*. He would say, that the Spirit of God united it self to real, and not to celestial and aerial Flesh, as some Hereticks imagin'd. The turn is somewhat *Platonizing*; but after all, he did not intend to advance any thing but the ancient Doctrine, since he disputes against those men, who held that Jesus Christ was pure Spirit clothed with celestial Flesh: and he on the other hand, supposed that Jesus Christ was a real Man, true Flesh animated with a Divine Spirit, a Man born of a Virgin, truly born of the Substance of a Woman, altho' the form'd by the Power of a Spirre.

*Tertullian*, in one of his Tracts (*de veritate. Virg. in initio*) having given us this plain Rule of Faith, which he calls the immutable and unchangeable Rule, to this purpose, "That we must believe in one God alone, &c. and in his Son Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary, &c." in another Tract (*de Praescrip. adu. Hare.*) pretends you with another Rule of the *Platonizing* Faith, which is, "to believe that the same Word, by which God created the World, spoke to the Patriarchs, and inspir'd the Prophets, coming forth from the Spirit, and the Power of the Father, it lit upon the Virgin, and was made Flesh, and wrought in J. C. allsorts of Miracles. Had he forgot that the Apostolick Faith is not to be changed or reformed? No without doubt, he does not pretend to change any thing, but only gives the

antient Opinion of the Conception of J. C. in *Platonick Stile*, in *Philosophick Jargon*: or to speak better, he substitutes an Allegory manag'd with force and violence in the room of this Evangelical Expression [*born of a Virgin by the Power of the Holy Ghost,*] which is plain and literal. This Spirit, as *Tertullian* says, being an Emanation from the Spirit, and the Power of the Father, may be said in a mystick and sublime Sense, to be the same Spirit who created the World, and inspir'd the Prophets.

St. Cyril, in his *Catecheses*, explains a Creed purely Arian, which Dr. Bell pretends to be the antient Creed of *Jerusalem*, the Mother of all Churches. I believe, it says, in One God the Father, &c. and in One Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father before Ages, true God, by whom all things were made, incarnate and made Man, &c. I said, this Creed is *Arian*, for 'tis exprest in the same Terms as all the *Arian Confessions* that are now extant. And if the Doctor pretends, that 'tis Orthodox at the best hand, it can pass for no more than the *Creed of Constantinople*, as Monsieur Le Vaillor has observed, (*Traité de l'Estampon*, ch. 6. p. 226.) "This Creed of St. Cyril, says he, is almost the same with that of *Constantinople*, especially in the Article concerning the Holy Spirit. If it be true, that the *Catecheses* we have, are those which Cyril made in his Youth, as St. Jerome reports it; this Prelate reviewed and augmented 'em, after the Council of *Constantinople*, whose Creed he explains almost word for word. In this case, it will not be certain, that the Article concerning the Church was in the *Creed of Jerusalem*. Cyril might have added it to his *Catecheses* after the Synod. If this Conjecture holds as to the Article of the Church, much more will it do so as to the *Platonick Word*. We can but say, In this case, it will not be certain, that the Article concerning a Son begotten before Ages, was in-

the Creed of Jerusalem Cyril might add to his Catecheses after the Synod of [Constantinople.]

Let's join with this Learned Prose-lyte, the famous Mons. du Pin, who in his second Tom. of his Bibliothèque, p. 413, intimates "the Novelty of Cyril's Creed upon this account: i. That it has the Article of Life Everlasting, which is not in all the antient Creeds. And in his 1 Tom. Paris. Edit. p. 30. he says, that Cyril in his Catecheses makes a particular Creed, which the Church of Jerusalem us'd at the time that this Father wrote his Catecheses. Those who have made Commentaries upon the Creed, have omitted among others these Words [Life ever-lasting.] And that St. Jerom observes in his Letter to Pammachius, that the Creed ended with the same Words [The Resurrection of the flesh.] These Words of du Pin are remarkable. He says, Cyril made a Creed which was peculiar to him, and that it cannot be ascribed to the Church of Jerusalem, till the time when this Father wrote. For 'tis certain, that this is the sense of their Words, in an Author that professes to believe that the Creed is not ancient.

But however that be, Dr. Bull deceives himself grossly, in supposing this Creed of Cyril to be the antient Creed of Jerusalem. We can produce another of greater Antiquity, which the same Church ascribes to the Apostle St. James. Bishop Usher (*de Symbol.* p. 10.) presents us with it. "It must be minded, says the Primate, that there were two sorts of Creeds us'd by the Easterns; one contracted, which Ruffinus compares with that of Rome and Aquileia; the other fuller and larger. Among the first we place the Creed of Jerusalem, the Mother of all Churches, τοσεω εις Ιανα Θεον, &c. I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, &c. Thus 'tis read in the antient Li-

turgy of the Church of Jerusalem ascribed to St. James, who is held to have been the first Bishop of that Place: and with this Creed an Office was read once a year, in memory of its Antiquity. And since the Articles that follow have (which I mightily regret) been left out, as suppos'd to be generally known; I thought it proper to repair this Loss, by inserting in the room of what is wanting, the entire Confession of the Apostolic Faith, that Cyril expounded to the Illuminated at Jerusalem, which indeed is somewhat larger, as it appears by this addition at the beginning viz. visible and invisible."

The short Creed which Usher gives us being made by St. James, it follows, that of Cyril is an Exposition and Commentary: And 'tis impossible on the contrary, that this should be an Abridgment of Cyril's Creed; for nothing can be more antient than the draught of an Apostle. Without doubt, the shorter Creed is the Original, and the larger none other than a Copy slutt'd and lengthened with unstretched Platonism, and has not Simplicity enough to pass for an Apostle's; but it may, without wrong, be accounted the Work of a Platonizing Faction. But let that be as it will, there is good ground for believing, that Dr. Bull had a mind to deceive us, in dissembling his Knowledge of this antient Creed of St. James, of which Bishop Usher makes mention; and in palming upon us for the most antient Eastern Creed, that of S. Cyril which is so very different. For altho' we have but two Articles of the Jerusalem Creed, which is the same with what we call the Apostles, yet these two are sufficient to shew, that the Apostles Creed is in effect the most antient of all; however Dr. Bull (*Jud. Eccl.* p. 128.) pretends it to have been of later Date: And I say further, this may satisfy us, that at this time [of Cyril] the Mother of all Churches had strangely alter'd her Faith.

Bishop

Bishop Usher observed what was added to the first Article : Who doubts but that like might have been done to others, about which there were far greater disputes? He might have observed, the same, and the thing is obvious, that the second Article, concerning the Person of J. C. being entire, as it appears by the Oriental Creed of Ruffinus, which goes no further; it follows then, that all that which is in Cyril upon the same Article, has been added since Platonism prevailed. Ruffinus, says Bishop Usher, has compar'd the shorter of these two Oriental Creeds with the Roman: wherefore this shorter Creed was not the same with the Roman; let the Doctor say what he will, nor iste we to be much concern'd, as the Primate speaks, for the Loss of ipsius Ruffinus has preserv'd it: "Almo[n]d all the Eastern Churches," says he (in Symbol. Apofit) give us "their Creed; after this sooper, I believe in one God, the Father Almighty;" and then in the following Article, "whereas we say, and in J. C. his only Son our Lord, they say, in one Lord J. C. his only Son, professing one God and one Lord, according to the doctrine of St. Paul." Note here all the difference the Easterns made between their Creed, and that we call the Apostles: There's nothing in 'em of the Pre-existence of J. C. and his Generation before Ages, as you have in Cyril's Creed. This shows that the Article concerning J. C. goes no farther in this part of the Oriental Creed, which Bishop Usher gives us, than the [etc.]: does not retrench any part of it, but is plac'd at the end of the Article, only to shew that the remaining Articles are omitted. We may conclude therefore, that all the Jargon of the Platonic Philosophy in Cyril's Creed, took place of the antient simple Tradition [which was], I believe in J. C. the only Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. And consequently the antient Opinion of the Fi-

liation and Deification of J. C. ran no higher than his being born of a Virgin by the Power of the Holy Ghost; this was the true Theology concerning him.

Ruffinus had reason for calling this plain Confession, the Tradition of his Ancestors, meaning thereby, not the Doctors bigotted with Plato's Enthusiasm, but the whole Body of the Church (the People, as Du Pin observes, Tom. I. p. 30.) who doubtless never enter'd into the Speculations of those Doctors. Let us see what Marcellus wrote to Pope Julius: (Epiphon. heres. 72.) where (after he had said what he thought fit concerning the Word, which he denies to be an Hypostasis distinct from the Father, saying it subsists in the Father, and that 'tis his very Wisdom and his inseparable Power) he confines himself to this Confession of Faith, which he says he had received from the Scripture, and his Ancestors: "I believe in God Almighty, and in J. C. his only Son our Lord, begotten by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was buried, the third day he was raised from the Dead and ascended into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God. Whence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead. And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Church, the Remission of Sins, the Resurrection of the Flesh, the Life everlasting. See here in express words the Creed we call the Apostles, the antient Theology, without Platonism, without Speculation. There's nothing retrench'd from the antient Confessions of Faith, yet Retrenchments were not unusual amongst some of them. If therefore some Creeds are found to be larger in some of the Antients, 'tis according to their laudable Practice, by an addition of their novel Interpretations. This is the more evident, because that pretended Interpretations are found to be pure Platonism, with which 'tis known they were extremely bigotted."

## C H A P. VIII.

## Reflections upon the Apostles Creed, with respect to the foregoing Doctrine.

To render the Antiquity of the Apostles Creed doubtful, 'tis said, that 'tis notorious, that the greater part of the Articles have been added from time to time, and upon divers occasions. What of that, if those additional Articles are not in the present Contest? Is it not enough, that the three Articles concerning the *Father*, the *Son* and the *Holy Ghost*, as to their Nature and Person (as we speak) I say those three Articles, whereupon we dispute, are very ancient? 'Tis true, the ancient Formulae of Faith contain'd scarce any thing besides these, which are an Exposition of the Form of Baptism; but then 'tis of these only we are debating. Yea the Liturgy ascribed to St. James, and the Oriental Creed of *Rusfinus*, give us these Articles in the proper Words of Scripture, clean of all Platonism. Is not such a piece of Antiquity more primitive, and even antecedent to *Cyril* and all the *Platonic Fathers*? But this Creed, says Dr. Bull, whatever Simplicity it has, is to be understood in the Extent or Latitude the *Platonizing Fathers* took it in, who made it; always supposing, as you see, that it was not made, till since the Church expounded in her larger Creeds her *Platonic* Faith. I will turn this manner of reasoning upon him, and say, that supposing on the contrary, the ancient Liturgy had this Creed in the Simplicity, wherein we have it at this time; it cannot be understood but in the sense of the *Nazarene* Disciples of St. James, who most certainly did not platonize, as indeed we have prov'd. *Platonism* owes not its Rise to the *Jewish*, but to the *Gentile*

*Converts*, and such Gentiles too as were Followers of *Plato*. True Orthodoxy at the very beginning of Christianity, confisited in believing that *J. C. was begotten of the Holy Ghost*, and consequently was of angelical Race or Origin: That he had a sort of Pre-existence in this H. Spirit of Power, which was united to him, and that upon these accounts, he was really and in the Letter, the proper, and only Son of God. A Doctrine, which the Disciples of St. James maintained against the *Cerinthians* and *Athanasius*, there being no other Controversy than concerning the Generation of the Son of God. For which reason the Creed of *Marcellus* says barely, that the only Son of God was begotten by the Holy Ghost of a Virgin, and not begotten before Ages; which might have been said with as much ease as 't other, and must necessarily have been said, if the meaning of the Author of the Creed had been, that [only Son] signifies, *begotten from all Eternity*.

But after all, what will the Doctor say with his Interpretations and his Expositions of the antique Creed? I have observed in divers Passages of his Writings, that he requires too much to be granted him. For instance, he will have it in his *Judic. Eccl. p. 141.* that this Elogy of the Holy Ghost in the Creed of *Constantinople*, *The Living Lord, proceeding from the Father, who is to be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son*; That this magnificent Elogy was an Interpretation of the Word [Paraclet] in the Creed of *Cyril*. Wonderful Paraphrase, strange Interpretation: that the Paraclet should

should signify all these fine things! *The Living Lord!* proceeding from the Father! who is to be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son. Well! after this do we think the Doctor does not dare to be believed, when he assures us, that the Son begotten before Ages, the true God by whom all things were made, is the true sense of these Words, *the only Son of God?* With the good Leave of this Commentary-Maker, 'tis more natural to believe, in adhering to the Terms of the ancient Creed, that begotten by the Holy Ghost of a Virgin, is the true Sense and the right Exposition.

In fine, this pure, simple Creed, was not fram'd by a *Cabal*, a Party; as the Creeds of the Councils of *Nice* and *Constantinople* were, &c. Tis not known, if I may so speak, whence it came; 'tis as it were fallen down from Heaven; 'tis the Suffrage of the Universal Church, and 'tis this Suffrage that has saved the Church from Shipwreck, and gain'd her Reverence. *Rufinus* in his *Expos. Symb.* makes no scruple to say, that this Creed was establish'd to be a Mark of Distinction, by which they might be known, who preach'd J. C. truly, according to *Apostolic Rules*. But 'tis proper I should here transcribe a fine Passage out of Dr. *Hammond* upon this Subject, in his Discourse of fundamental Points, chap. 8. Says he, " This Creed is the very Badge and Livery of the Apostles, the Abridgment of that Faith, which was received from the Apostles: for altho in their Epistles, written to such as were already Christians, one finds no one complete Catalogue of these Articles, which they taught every where, because they supposed them sufficiently known; yet however the most ancient Writers of the Church assure us, that in all places where the Apostles went to plant the Faith (of Christ) they publish'd there distinctly, and left there all these Articles, which serve for a Foundation to the Christian life. And 'tis reaso-

" nable to believe, that the Apostles' Creed was the summary of these fundamental Articles. — 'Tis certain, that before the *Nicene Creed* was made, all the Churches in the World us'd this formulay of Faith, which they received from their Ancestors, and they from the Apostles themselves (See *Irenaeus lib. 1. c. 2. & lib. 3. c. 4.*) and there is not the least room to doubt, but this is the very same with that we at this day call the Apostles Creed. — *Marcellus* gives us a Confession of his Faith, which he says he received from his Predecessors, which is found to be the same with our Apostles Creed (See *Epiph. Her. 72.*) What I am saying, may be confirmed by this Observation of St. *Austin*, in his *Discourse de Bapt. contr. Donat. cap. 24.* viz. that 'tis reasonable to believe, that what has generally been received in the Church, and has always been held by it, without being instituted by any Council, comes to us from Apostolic Tradition (also) *Tertullian de veland. Virg.* " The Rule of Faith, says he, is one and immutable, &c. That this Abridgment of our Creed given us by *Tertullian*, is one and immutable, can be from no other Cause but from its Apostolic Origin, which alone ought to pretend to that Privilege. For this reason the same Father says elsewhere (*contr. Prax. cap. 2.*) *This Rule came down to us from the very first preaching of the Gospel.*

'Tis true, the Controversy that the Platonizing Christians had at first with the Christians of *Judea*, made the Church, when in power, despise this Creed, which favour'd its Adversaries; so that it but rarely appears in its Simplicity, but is for the most part clog'd and blended with *Platonism*. But in the fourth Century, the Dispute being only between the *Athanasians* and the *Arians*, both good *Platonists*, holding the Pre-existence; this Creed was received, for it oppos'd one no more than

other; and neither of these two Parties had then prevailed over one another. The Church of Rome made it always her Creed, for the Platonic Controversies were not so warm there as in the East. But Dr. Bull will return to the Charge, and tell us, as he has done more than once, that to be begotten by the Holy Ghost of a Virgin, is no such glorious Privilege for the Messias; that it does not give him any Preheminence above some other Men, who have been miraculously begotten, and by the immediate Power of God. That in a word, it answers not that great Idea, which those Words (the only Son of God) naturally raise in our Minds. I have already answered this Objection, with a Passage of *Bartholomew of Edessa*. I could further say, that according to this way of reasoning of the Doctor's, J.C. is no longer by his Hypothesis the only Son of God, if we take those Words, as he does, in their strictest sense; because he has a Brother begotten of God as well as himself; I mean the Holy Ghost. He will clear himself of this, when he can shew me what the difference is between Generation and Procession; that is to say between Emanation and Generation. I mean such a difference, that makes the one a Son, and the other not; this is what we expect from him.

He knows very well, that this knotty difficulty put St. Austin hard to it. This Father in his 5th Book, *g.ach. de Trin.* puts this Question: "Whence is it that "the third Person is not the Image of "God as well as the second? Why not "his Word? Why not his begotten "Son? He protests that 'tis hard to "give a reason, why the Father did "not beget one as well as 't'other, since "as the *Intellect* begat its *Wisdom* by "knowing it self, it seems likely it "should beget its *Love*, by loving it "self. And at last finding himself too weak to master this difficulty, he beakes himself to his usual Sophistry, and makes you a rare *Medley* of Discourse,

wherein he understands not what he says himself. After so great a Master, what may we expect from Dr. Bull? or rather who will not be surprized to hear his Objections? 'Tis not enough, says he, that God begets a Son of the Substance of a Woman, by his own Power, without the Intervention of a Man: 'Tis not enough that this Generation is without Example. This extraordinary Son, if he be not the Supreme God, he is not therefore the Son of God. 'Tis not enough that God has given us an extraordinary Man for the Messias. If he be not the Supreme God, he cannot be the Messias. Wonderful! What! if God had thought fit to send none other than such a Man, a second Adam, nor a jot more the Son of God than the first Adam was, shall this be no Messias? And would this be done upon a Principle of Religion? Should this Messias be thought unworthy of us, because he does not answer the Idea, and the Expectation of the Doctor? I am astonish'd, when I consider the extravagant Hypothesis of our Trinitarians. God (in their opinion) will not make good his illustrious Promises, his Word given to Abraham and his Seed, and his Oath sworn to David, that he would raise him up a Son to reign upon his Throne: God, I say, will do nothing that will answer the Greatness of his Promise, and the Expectation of the Patriarchs, if the Blessed Seed, if the King so often promis'd and so long expected, if the Messias, who is so glorious, be not the supreme God himself. Nothing is magnificent, according to these Gentlemen, if it be not extravagant. God may do well in raising a miraculous Seed to Abraham from the Womb of a Virgin: And he may do well in raising up to David a King and a Prophet, drench'd with the Fulness of his Spirit, and reigning at the Right Hand of his Majesty. All this has nothing great in it, this will not come up to their System of the Messias, nor deserve place in their sublime Theology, if the supreme God himself be not incarnate,

nate, and suffers not himself to be crucified, to merit by his Sufferings, the same Glory he voluntarily abandoned. This is what they call a Glorious Gospel, nor that plain simple Religion, which presents you with a Man ascending into

Heaven; but that which without *Machinations or Human Policy*, brings the supreme God down from Heaven, Good God! What vain Imaginations are in the Heart of Man!

## C H A P. IX.

*The Theology of the Primitive Church went no farther, than the miraculous Conception of the Messiah, &c.*

IT is time to consider in the third place, that the Theology of the Primitive Church went no farther than the miraculous Conception of the Messiah: Which appears from this, that the Expression [*mere Man*] which he condemned as heretical, was not oppos'd to an *Eternal Generation*, but to Christ's being begotten by the Holy Ghost of a Virgin. So that the Platonizing Christians themselves, who have us'd it in this last sense, have been as it were forced to do it thro Custom: What remains of the ancient Tradition, obliging them to speak in that manner. Yes, the Force of the ancient Tradition has made them to betray themselves, as we are about to shew. The Terms [*mere Man* *λαθανάτος*] bear at this day in our Minds a different Idea from that which was in the first Ages of the Church. With us now, it is supposed to exclude I know not what sort of a *Generation of the Substance of God*: But with the Antients it was purely oppos'd to the miraculous *Generation of the Substance of a Virgin*. We find at this day some Footsteps of the ancient usage of these Words. The Author of the Apostolic Constitutions, lib. 6. c. 26. giving an account of the Opinion of the Ebionites, says, *They hold J. C. to have been a [ mere Man ] by maintaining that he was not begotten any other way, but by the conjugal Intercourse of Joseph and Mary.* There cannot be a bet-

ter account than this, of what the Antients meant by a *mere Man*: A Man begotten by *Joseph*, and not a Man, who is not the supreme God.

*Justin*, or the Author of the Questions and Answers to the Orthodox, *Quæst. 65.* expresses himself thus: "Who "says he, Speaking of J. C.) was begot-  
"ten or conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
"the Son of God, but being born of  
"the Wife of *Joseph*, was the Son of  
"*Joseph*. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon*  
"them, &c. Wherefore, &c. shall be cal-  
"led the Son of God. It must be obser-  
ved here: 1. That Son of *Joseph* and  
Son of God, are two Terms oppos'd.  
J. C. is called the Son of *Joseph*, as he  
was born of the Wife of *Joseph*; and  
the Son of God, as he was begotten by  
the Holy Ghost. 2. That J. C. is called  
[Son of God] on the account of his  
being begotten by the Holy Ghost, in a  
sense directly oppos'd to [Son of  
Man] that is to say, in a sense of ex-  
cellence, which Dr. *Bull* is so bold as to  
deny. 3. That the Text of St. Luke,  
which *Justin* cites as a Proof, demon-  
strates in some sort, that the Antients did  
not at first ascribe any other Divinity to  
J. C. but that which was grounded up-  
on his being conceived, and born of a  
Virgin by the Holy Ghost.

In the next place let's attend to *Irenæus*, who takes the Terms [*mere Man*]  
in the same sense as *Justin*: "They  
lays

" says he, lib. 3. c. 23. who call him  
" (i.e. Christ) a mere Man begotten by  
" Joseph, continue in the Bondage of  
" the antient Disobedience." They then,  
according to Irenæus, held J. C. to be a  
mere Man, who believed he was begotten  
by Joseph, and consequently not begot-  
ten by the Holy Ghost of a Virgin: To  
make good this Charge against those  
Persons, it was not it seems necessary  
they should have denied a *Platonic Gene-  
ration*. But the Passage is so clear it  
needs no gloss.

I proceed to another Father, and that  
is Euseb., in his 3. B. c. 27. where he  
speaks thus of the *Ebionites*: "They  
believe J. C. to be a mere Man, an or-  
dinary Person begotten by Joseph and  
Mary, but otherwife a just Man, and  
extraordinary for his Virtue. You  
see hoy Eusebius, when *Platonism* did  
not run in his Head, acquaints us, that  
they were none other than *Ebionites*,  
who held J. C. was begotten by Joseph  
and Mary, upon which account it may  
be truly said, that they made him a  
mere ordinary Man. This scap'd *Euse-  
bius*, without doubt, by his following  
the Mode of speaking according to an-  
tient Tradition, which opposed in the  
Hereticks of that time, not those Chris-  
tians who denied an eternal Generation  
of the Substance of God, for where  
was that Notion then? but the *Ebionites*,  
who contested the miraculous Generation  
of the Substance of a Virgin.

It remains that I examine two Passa-  
ges of *Epiphanius*: The 1st is in his ac-  
count of the 29th Heresy, which is that  
of the *Nazarenes*, whom he ranks among  
the Hereticks; altho Irenæus, who must  
have known them better, has made no  
mention of this pretended Heresy: "I  
do not affirm, says *Epiphanius* of those  
Nazarenes, whether, following the  
Impiety of *Cerinthius*, they received  
J. C. to be but a mere Man; or whe-  
ther they acknowledged, which is the  
Truth, that he was begotten by the  
Power of the Holy Ghost on the Vir-

" gin Mary. The two things oppos'd in  
this Passage, make it evident to our pre-  
sent *Tertiarians*, that it is not believ-  
ing J. C. to be a *mere Man*, when with  
*Socinus* tis own'd, that he was begotten  
by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary*.

The second Passage of *Epiphanius* is in  
his 54th Heresy, which is that called the  
*Theodotians*, who he tells you, held J. C.  
to be a *mere Man*. How so? Why be-  
cause they believed he was begotten by  
a Man. This is clear, one Proposition  
explains 'other; to be a *mere Man*, and  
to be begotten by a Man, are Phrases e-  
quivalent. And by the Rule of Contra-  
ries, to be begotten by the Holy Ghost, is  
to be more than a *mere Man*, that is, to  
be the Son of God. The Angel tells us  
as much, and without doubt these were  
the Words which were the Foundation  
of the Theology of the Antients: For  
says the Angel, *The Power of the Highest  
shall overshadow thee, and that which  
shall be born of thee, not that which was  
begotten from Eternity, but that which  
shall be born of thee, shall be called the  
Son of God.* The Angel alludes to the  
Spirit of God, which overshadowed the  
*Chaos*; as if he would say, that the same  
Power of God, which drew the World  
out of that unshapen Mass, would like-  
wise cause the *Messias* to be born of  
Matter as infertile as the *Chaos* is self,  
even of the Womb of a Virgin; and  
that because of this extraordinary Birth,  
he should be called the Son of God. (See  
*Maldonate in loc.*)

The Expressions of the Angel have  
that force in them, that the Moderns  
themselves, when they are free from  
Prejudice, and their Minds are not en-  
gaged in the Controversy, have made  
them their Rule, according to which they  
express themselves as to the Elevation of  
J. C. often alledging his Conception of  
the Holy Ghost, as the formal Reason that  
made him the Son of God, in opposition  
to *son of Man*. Thus Bishop *Usher* us'd  
them, in explaining a Passage of *Lactantius*  
(*Dissertat. in Ignat. cap. 12.*) where he  
says,

says, "The Devil knew not whether the Mother of our Saviour, who was married to a Man, was a Virgin at the Birth of the Child, nor whether the new-born Infant ought to be called the Son of God, or the Son of Joseph." This Learned Person explaining an Apostolic Doctrine, speaks in an Apostolic Manner: He opposes [Son of Joseph] to [Son of God] but to what Son of God? To a Son begotten from all Eternity? 'Tis plain enough of what Son he is speaking, 'tis to a Son of God who was begotten by the Holy Ghost, who was not the Son of any Man, altho he was born of a Woman; and who had none but God for his Father. So *Grotius* upon *Mark* 1. 1. having given the reason why St. *Mark* spoke nothing of the miraculous Birth of J. C. he adds: "That twas not necessary to speak of it till there were such, who held that J. C. was no more than a mere Man. From which Words of this great Critic it follows, that to hold J. C. to be a mere Man, is not to deny him to be the Supreme God, but to deny that he was born of a Virgin.

Dr. *Bull* in his *Judicium Eccl. p. 43.* objects against this ancient Faith, that no Writer has spoken of it, as of a Tradition different from the Platonic Faith, which is pretended to have prevailed afterwards. That on the contrary, *Eusebius* gives this Testimony of the Bishops of Jerusalem, that they had a right Knowledge of J. C. and that their Doctrine was found on this Article. But that which I am now going to say concerning this ancient Faith, and that which shall be said hereafter, makes it evident enough, that 'tis to little purpose for the Doctor to boast, that Antiquity is altogether silent in this matter. As for his Proof from *Eusebius*, 'tis too uncertain and general to be us'd as an Argument in our Question. *Eusebius* says in general, that the Antients were found in their Opinion, or had a right Knowledge of J. C. Who doubts it? Since in be-

lieving him to be born of a Virgin by the Operation of the Holy Ghost, and not by her Conversation with *Joseph*, they professed the sound Doctrine of that time; and they rejected the Error oppos'd to it, which made J. C. but a mere Man. But, *Eusebius*, 'twill be said, could not speak so, but with regard to his own Opinion, which was that of the Pre-existence. But I shall reply, whence had *Eusebius* his Information, that the Doctrine of the Antients was found? Was it not from *Hegeſippus*? or, as he himself says, from Monuments of the Antients, which is the same thing. But if this ancient Author (*Hegeſippus*) did not believe the Platonic Pre-existence, as *Eusebius* did; will it not follow, that the Doctrine of these Bishops was found, not with respect to the sense of *Eusebius*, but with regard to the ancient Author, who gives them that Testimony? Every one frames for himself an Idea of sound Doctrine, according to his particular Judgment of things. Supposing therefore, that this ancient Author believed, as the Orthodox Doctrine of his time was, that J. C. was not the Son of *Joseph* and *Mary*; and (supposing) on the other side, there was none other Theology of his Birth than this, that he was the Son of God by the Virgin *Mary*; *Hegeſippus* might very well say, the Nazarene Bishops were found in their Doctrines of the Person of J. C. without any ground for concluding thence, that they held the Platonic Faith, and were of *Eusebius* his Judgment. 'Tis enough that they were not engaged in the Error of the *Ebionites*, because they were Orthodox. To explain this by an example, let's suppose that *Eusebius* had said of some *Arian* Bishop, that his Faith was found as to the Person of J. C. could the Doctor and his Friends thence conclude, that this Bishop believed the Consubstantiality and Equality of the Father and the Son? By no means. All they could hence infer, is, that the Bishop believed the Platonic Pre-existence, which

was the true Faith according to *Eusebius*, who believed neither the *Consubstantiality* nor the *Equality*, &c. We ought to reason in the same manner from the Words of *Hegesippus*, who held that for a sound Faith, which *Eusebius* would have called impious, if he had known it, as the Doctor would that which *Eusebius* thought sound. Who does not know, that those very Persons, who held the Orthodox Faith of the first Ages, I mean that of the miraculous Birth of our Saviour, were accounted impious in the

time of *Eusebius*? Because they would not receive the Notion of the *Platonic Word*, and the modish Philosophy of an Eternal Generation, that was rashly superinduced or brought in the room of a plain Doctrine, of a Generation in time of *Mary* by the Holy Ghost, that is of a Woman, by (the Power of) God. But from the beginning it was not so, they had another Theology, for the better Demonstration of which, I shall shew in the following Chapter that,

## C H A P. X.

*The Word, and the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost) according to the sense of the Antients, were but one and the same thing.*

I Shall lastly consider that the [Word] among the Antients, and the [Holy Ghost] in the Evangelists, are but one and the same thing; and that the Platonicizing Writers themselves, led by an ancient Tradition, the Footsteps whereof remain'd a long time, have confounded these two Terms, having often used 'em in one and the same Signification: An evident Proof that the Philosophy of the Platonic Word owes its Birth to Allegories made upon that Divine Power, which overshadowed the Blessed Virgin; which Power may be indifferently call'd the Holy Ghost, or the Word. But as the latter Term is more agreeable to the Doctrine of *Plato*, so 'tis more frequently used. So that at last, this Conformity of Terms brought the Platonic Fathers to a conformity in Doctrine with *Plato*; that is to say, they fell into two Errors directly opposite to the Doctrine of the Gospel. One, in that they have made of a Power, or a mere Operation, an Hypostasis; the other, in that they have made two Hypostases, of the Word and the Holy Ghost, which at the bottom are but two diverse Operations.

Where therefore they made two Hypostases of these two Operations, they follow'd their own Philosophy; but when they confounded these [Operations] they built, without question, upon this Passage of *David*, which says, *The Heavens were made by the Word of the Lord, and by the Breath of his Mouth*; where the Word and Breath of the Lord are put together as things inseparable, which differ not in effect, only in this, that the Breath is the Substance of the Word, and the Word is the Operation of the Spirit, to use the Words of *Tertullian*, *adv. Prax.*

I shall pass over *Hermas*, who in his 5th & 9th Similitudes, says, *That the Holy Ghost is the Son of God*. I have already shewn that he speaks thus but in parable; for which reason his Testimony would be of no use but to serve for an Illusion. And I shall say nothing more of *Ignatius*, who salutes the Church at *Smyrna*, in the Inscription of his Epistle, with these Words, *The Holy Spirit which is the Word of God*; as if he had said, by or thro him, who is the Holy Ghost, or the Word of God. This Passage

## Chap. 10. The Antients Sense of the Word and Holy Spirit. 127

Passage is not very exact or clear, so as to perceive the meaning of the Author, and to be able to draw from it a convincing Proof. Let us begin therefore with *Justin Martyr*. He in his 2d *Apol.* p. 74, &c. having stild Jesus Christ the first and principal Power, the Son and the Word, who had not his Birth from Man, but by the Power of God; he comes afterwards to examine the Passage in *St. Luke*, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, &c.* "By the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) says he, and the Power which came from God, we ought to understand nothing but the Word, which is the first-born of God. And for the better understanding what Word he is speaking of, he adds all in one Breath, "That 'tis the Spirit which inspir'd the Prophets, and which spake in the Person of a Prophet, or in the Person of the Father, or in the Person of Christ, or in the Person of the People. Here's no difficulty; either he has said nothing, or he has formally said, that the Holy Ghost which inspir'd the Prophets, and the Power of the most High of which *St. Luke* speaks, and the Word in *St. John*, are all but one and the same thing.

After a Testimony so express, I have no need to heap up other Passages out of the Writings of this Father, wherein we may in part discover the same truth: As when, in his Dialogue with *Trypoo*, P. 327. he makes an Opposition between the Word of the Serpent by which Eve conceived, and the Word of God by which the Blessed Virgin did conceive. These are rather flights of Fancy, and starts of Wit in a Preacher, than an Exposition of the Christian Faith. Only I would have it observ'd, how in his 5th Book, P. 284. he collects all the Qualities, and all the Names which were usually given to the Word, and to the Spirit, that he may apply 'em to Jesus Christ. "First," says he, "God begar, before all the Creatures, a certain ens-

"sonable Power, which is sometimes called the Spirit, the Glory of the Lord, sometimes the Son, sometimes the Wisdom, sometimes an Angel, sometimes God, sometimes the Lord and the Word: For all these Names are given to him, either because he is the Minister of the Designs (or Purposes) of the Father, or because he was begotten by his Will. All this has much of the air of a theological Allegory, by which one would express that Spirit, and that Power of God, which he employ'd to execute his Counsels, and which comes not from his Understanding by a necessary Emanation, but by his Will by a free Operation: That Power, I say, which may be called his Word, or his Spirit, according to the different respects wherein one considers it.

I will produce another Proof of this important Truth from *Theophilus Antiochenus*, in his 2d Book to *Autolycus*. "Who (says he, speaking of the Word) being the Spirit of God, the Beginning, the Wisdom, the Power of the Highest, came down into the Prophets, by whom he spake. What could he say more formal to make us understand that he took for one and the same thing, the Spirit of God, his Word, his Wisdom, and his Power? His meaning cannot be mistaken, when one considers, that the Spirit, and the Word, whereof he speaks, is the same that inspir'd the Prophets: Words that very well agree with those of *Justin*, which I now come to examine. These two Fathers understood by the Word, nothing but that prophetick Spirit, the fulness whereof dwelt bodily in Jesus Christ, and that *St. Paul* calls the fulness of the Godhead. This is, in effect, the Explication, that the Author of the Homilies ascrib'd to *Origen*, has given (*in Diversos Homil. 2.*) "St. Paul, says he, calls the fulness of the Godhead, those mystick Senses (or the truth of those legal Shadows) which dwelt bodily in Jesus Christ; that is to say, truly and really;

" ready ; because that he is the Fountain and Founteins of Grace, the truth of the ancient Symbol, and the accomplishment of Prophetick Visions. But, according to the Fathers, Jesus Christ was fill'd with this Prophetick Spirit, not only when the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a Dove, and that God made him a Prophet ; but especially when he was conceived by the Power of the Highest : and he was, as I may say, begotten a Prophet, that is to say, when by virtue of his Generation his Body was formed for the Office of a Prophet. And 'tis chiefly this last Consideration that is urg'd against the *Josephites*, because this Privilege of his Birth makes us to regard him, not only as a Man who was a Prophet, but as a Prophet who was also the Son of God. But to return to the Passage from *Theophilus*, if it be read throout, one shall find a fine Allegory upon the Word, and the *Holy Spirit*, which he calls the Wisdom of God. Sometimes he considers 'em as two Divine Emanations proceeding from the Bowels of God, and which God us'd as his two Hands, or two Ministers, by whom he created the World : And sometimes he makes 'em but one Operation, and so both are the Spirit and the Word, the Wisdom and the Power of God, &c. Why so ? If not because that this Spirit takes divers Names, either for the diversity of its Prolation, or for its different Operations : For the Word is the Spirit (or Breath) prolated with a Sound and a Voice, and the Spirit is a Word brought forth tacitely and in silence ; the one with, the other without sound : One acts inwardly in a hidden and secret manner, and the other outwardly and openly. 'Tis thus the Fathers speak. In my opinion, 'tis idle to look for any exactness in these sort of allegorical Discourses, which are loose, and where the Fancy taking its swing, drives on in full Career.

*Irenæus*, one of those Fathers who was obliged to urge the miraculous Con-

ception of our Saviour against the *Ebionites*, confounded the *Holy Ghost* with the *Word*. " These Hereticks would see " own, says *Irenæus*, lib. 5. cap. 1. the " Union of God with Man. Why ? Because, says he, they believed the Lord Jesus to be a mere Man. How a mere Man ? Because they believed him so to be the Son of *Joseph* and *Mary*, like other Men, and not of a *Virgin* by the *Operation of the Holy Ghost*. What says the Holy Father to this ? He laments that they would not consider, how in the first Creation, " the Breath of God uniting " it self to the Body of *Adam*, animated " the Man, and made him a reasonable " Creature : So in the New Creation, " the Word of the Father, and the " Spirit of God, being united to the " old Substance of *Adam*, hath form'd " a living and perfect Man, who contains " in himself the perfect Father.

Dr. *Bull*, in his *Judic. Eccl.* p. 210. having cited this Passage, takes no notice of these words [who contains in himself the perfect Father] it may be because *Irenæus* seems to say, that 'twas the Father who was incarnate ; or, as 'tis more probable, because these Words expressly demonstrate, that by the Word, *Irenæus* understood nothing but the very Power of God. The living Man, of whom he speaks, containing in himself the perfect Father, only because he was filled with God's Spirit and God's Word, which were united to the Man. But whatever he himself thought, this is a truth that one perceives at first in reading the Text of *Irenæus*. 'Tis at least most evident, that he confounds the *Spirit of God* with the *Word of the Father*, as one and the same Power which formed the *New Adam* ; and that he opposes it to the Divine Breath, and Spirit of God, which animated the *first Adam* : His only aim being to oppose the *Ebionites*, who denied that the Spirit of God intervin'd in the Conception of Jesus Christ. His only concern is also to establish firmly this miraculous Conception, and to make 'em

'em regard Jesus Christ as the most perfect Man, whom the Father, who is perfect, had miraculously begotten by his *Word* and by his *Spirit*, in the same manner, as by the means of his Almighty Word he animated the first Man with the Breath of Life. To make *Irenæus* his Conception of the Word the same with the Moderns, is to see and not perceive. In short, by reading his Text alone, one shall be convinced, that in his stating the Divinity of Jesus Christ he goes no farther than his miraculous Conception by the Holy Ghost. He not only confounds the Word with the Spirit, but calls the *Word* the Descent of the Holy Spirit into the Womb of *Mary*: He calls it, I say, the Union and Mixture of God with Man. He says, the Father wrought at the Incarnation of his Son, or at the new Generation, with the same Hands (excuse his Phrase) as he did at the Generation of the *Old Adam*. If we ask him what he means by *Hands* in this place, he tells you in his 4th Book, 37 Chap. that he understands thereby, the Word of God, his Son, his Wisdom, and his Spirit: He means, that

*powerful Command* which God us'd in the Creation of things, which is called his Spirit, forasmuch as it is in God, and is in a manner his Soul; and which is also call'd his Word and his Son, in regard that it came from his Mouth to form the Creation, it was in a manner *begotten*: That is to say, by the same manner of speaking, that the Wisdom and the Power of God are called his *Hands*, by the same they are called his Son, his Word, and his Spirit. And further, to make it clearer that this Father always confounds the Holy Ghost with the Word, I must observe, that in the last Passage I am about to cite, he applies to the Holy Ghost the same Words of *Solomon*, which are ordinarily applied to the Son. "The "Word, says he, who is the Son, was "always with the Father; and because "the *Wisdom*, which is the Holy Ghost, "was also with God before the Creation, "it speaks thus by *Solomon*, *God hath founded the Earth by his Wisdom, &c.* "and again, *The Lord created me, &c.* There is therefore but One God, who hath made all things by his Wisdom, and by his Word.

## C H A P. XI.

*A Continuation of the same Proofs, that the Antients understood by the Word and the Holy Ghost, one and the same thing.*

BUT after all, you will say, *Irenæus* makes an express distinction between the Word and the Spirit. I answer, Yes. But *David* makes the same distinction too, and from him I believe the Fathers borrowed theirs: *The Heavens*, says he, *were formed by the Word of the Lord, and by the Breath of his Mouth.* By the way, who will be so weak as to affirm, that he did not mean by these two words the same Power of God, as if the Word was not the Breath of his Mouth, and the Breath of his Mouth the Word? Can one forbear simi-

ing, when one sees our Divines put *David* in the number of the Trinitarians? In fine, *Irenæus* extols the Generation of the Son of God by the Operation of the Holy Ghost, as infinitely more excellent than the Generation of the first Man, which was by breathing Life into him, or by the Divine Breath. *Irenæus* affirms it, but Dr. *Bull* denies it, maintaining that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God by virtue of his miraculous Conception, in a manner more excellent than *Adam* was by virtue of his immediate Generation (or Formation) by

God's own hand. Let us suppose it as the Doctor would have it, yet after all he must agree that this Holy Father carries the Parallel that he makes between the first and second *Adam*, no further than their Generation, which was equally extraordinary in both. This appears in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter of his 3<sup>d</sup> Book.  
 " If the first *Adam*, says he, had his  
 " Being from a Man, it might be said  
 " with some shew of reason, that 'tis  
 " the same as to the second *Adam*, and  
 " that *Joseph* was his Father. But if it  
 " be true on the contrary, that the *first*  
 " was form'd out of the Earth by the  
 " *Word* of God; must not the same  
 " *Word* acting with the same Power as  
 " he did at the Formation of *Adam*,  
 " carry a resemblance of the same  
 " Generation? Let this Comparison be  
 a little minded; it contains this clearly,  
 that God did no more in the Generation  
 of the second *Adam*, in whom he would  
 dwell, than in that of the first *Adam*; that  
*Adam* and Jesus Christ are the im-  
 mediate Production of this *Word*: Con-  
 sequently there's no more reason to infer  
 the hypostatick Union of the *Word* with  
 Jesus Christ, than with *Adam*; this  
*Word* being, as you see, nothing but  
 the Power of God, which having im-  
 mediately formed the first Man, did also  
 form Jesus Christ after the same primitive  
 manner of Generation: All the  
 difference is, that God was pleas'd to  
 dwell in the latter after an extraordinary  
 manner.

Let's see in the next place what *Tertullian* has to say. He was a great *Platonist*, but that Party does not always strictly observe the Rules of *Platonism*: They have their lucid Intervals, wherein some Remains of the antient Tradition drop from their Pens. Whenever they philosophize according to the humour of that Faction, they are to be suspected, 'tis the effect of their Prejudices: but when they happen to speak to the disadvantage of their own Hypotheses, what is it that could oblige them to it, but the

Power of Truth alone? *Tertullian* therefore, at the end of his Discourse against *Præterit*, setting this matter of the Nature of the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*, to the bottom, spea's of 'em as one and the same Power. 'Tis worth while to read the whole throughout, but I shall content my self with this following Passage, which is decisive, and beyond dispute. (*Contra Præterit. cap. 26.*) "The Spirit of God (i. e. *Holy Ghost*) shall come upon thee, &c. By saying the Spirit of God, altho' the Spirit of God be God, nevertheless he not calling it directly God, he would have us understand a Part of the Whole, which was to attend the Person of the Son, and get him the Name that he has. This is that Spirit of God, which we call the *Word* also: For as when St. John says, the *Word* was made *Flesh*, by the term [Word] we understand the Spirit; so, in this Passage we understand the *Word* under the Name of the *Spirit*; since the *Spirit* is the Substance of the *Word*, and the *Word* the Operation of the *Spirit*, and these two are but one: For if the *Spirit* be not the *Word*, and the *Word* be not the *Spirit*, 'twill follow, that he of whom St. John says, that he was made *Flesh*, will not be the same with him of whom the Angel says, that he shall be made *Flesh*.

Let us weigh well all these Words: By the Spirit *Tertullian* understands nothing but a Portion of the whole, a Beam of the Substance of God, as he expresses himself elsewhere; because otherwise it would follow, according to *Præterit*, that the Father himself was incarnate. He will have it, that this Portion makes the Son what he is, that is, the Son of God: He confounds the *Spirit* with the *Word*, and will have St. Luke and St. John speak the same Language; and that the first might have said, the *Word* shall come upon thee, and the latter, the *Holy Ghost* was made *Flesh*; since that by the term [*Holy Ghost*] the *Word* must be understood, and by the term [*Word*] the

the Holy Ghost ; and that 'tis not likely St. John would speak of one particular Spirit, and the Angel of another. And more than this, he acquaints us what use we ought to make of these two Words, which at the bottom signify but the same thing ; and that is, we ought to call this *Power, Spirit,* when we would express its *Substance,* and *Word,* when we would express its *Operation.* In short, he decides our Question by saying, that these two are but one and the same thing, that is to say, the same *Power.* " For the Word (says he, in his *Rule of Faith,* *de Prescript.*) descended from the Spirit, and the Power of God, into the Womb of the Virgin. What does this import, *viz.* the Word descended from the Spirit and the Power of God, if not this, that the Word is nothing else but an Emanation, a Manifestation of the *Power,* which is internal and essential to God ? And 'tis almost in the same sense that *Marius Victorin.* (*contra Arium lib. I.*) states a twofold *Power* of the *Word,* that is to say, a twofold Operation ; the one manifest, which is *Iesus Christus*, in the Flesh ; the other secret (or hidden) which is the Holy Spirit : the one by way of *Manifestation*, the other by way of *Communication.* But after all, 'tis but a twofold Operation of one and the same *Power.* I forbear to take notice of divers other Testimonies of *Tertullian* of the like kind ; as for instance, at the beginning of his Book concerning *Prayer*, in his Dispute against *Marcion*, *lib. 3. cap. 6, & 16.* and in his Discourse of the Flesh of Jesus Christ, *cap. 19.* the Reader may consult 'em, if he pleases.

To the foremention'd Authority from *Tertullian*, I will subjoin that of *Novatian* (*de Trinitate cap. 19.*) " That which chiefly constituted the Son of God, says he, was the Incarnation of the Word of God, which was formed by means of that Spirit, of whom the Angel said, *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c.* For this is the true

" Son of God, who is of God, who uniting himself to the Son of Man, makes him, by that Union, the Son of God, which he was not before : So that the main reason of this Title, *the Son of God,* arises from that *Spirit* of the Lord which descended.

How, then, the *Word* of God incarnate by means of that Spirit which descended on *Mary* ! Is the second Person incarnate by means of the third ? Very good Divinity ! Is it not rather this Divine Operation, that bears the Name of the *Word*, which manifested it self in the Flesh of Jesus Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit, which insinuated it self into that Flesh ? That is to say, that which is called the *Spirit* on account of its Substance, is at the same time called the *Word* on account of its Manifestation, and its Operation. For this reason *Novatian* places not the chief ground of the *Filiation* of Jesus Christ, in a *Word*, which was a different Hypostasis from the Spirit ; but in the *Word*, which is the *Operation* of that *Spirit*, of whom the Scripture speaks, saying, *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c.* And it would not be understood what the Fathers mean, when they confound the *Word* with the *Spirit* that over-shadowed the Virgin, or when they distinguish these two Powers ; if it be not laid down for a Rule, that by the *Spirit* they understand the very Nature of the *Spirit*, the Principle (or Source) whence Prophecy comes ; and by the *Word*, a certain and particular *Operation* of that *Spirit* ; as for instance, the miraculous Conception of our Saviour.

I have yet an antient Doctor to alledg, and he not of the meanest Rank ; I mean St. *Cyprian*, who does not make any distinction between the *Word*, the *Spirit*, the *Son of God*, the *Wisdom*, &c. This Father having cited the second Psalm (*de Mont. Simey Zion, adv. Jud. cap. 2.*) where he speaks of the King whom God had anointed on Mount *Sion* ; " 'Tis upon this Mountain (says he),

" that the *Holy Spirit*, the Son of God, " was establish'd King, to proclaim the " Will and the Empire of God his Fa- " ther : and in the fourth Chapter of " the same Discourse, the Flesh of A- " dam, says he, which J. C. bore in a " Figure (that Term has a Tang of " Marcion's Heresy) this Flesh was call'd " by his Father the *Holy Spirit*, which " came down from Heaven, the Christ, " the anointed of the Living God, a " Spirit united to Flesh. The same Fa- " ther elsewhere (*in his Discourse de Idolatrie*, cap. 6.) expresses himself thus : " The Word and the Son of God is " sent, whom the Prophets had fore- " spoken of as the Instructor of Man- " kind. He is the Power of God, his " Reason, his Wisdom, and his Glory ; " the Holy Spirit hath put on Flesh, " God is mingled or united with Man.

The Holy Spirit is the Son of God, and at the same time the Word is the Son of God ; and which is more, the Flesh of J. C. is called the Holy Spirit which came down from Heaven ; which could not be true but of its Celestial Origin, and as it was formed by the Holy Spirit. So that *Cyprian* seems to intimate thereby, that 'tis because of this Celestial Origin, that the Scriptures say, the Flesh of J. C. came down from Heaven, that the Son of Man came down from Heaven ; for it may be very well said, that J. C. came down from Heaven, since his Origin was from Heaven in his Birth by the Holy Ghost. And what is the [Holy Spirit] but the *Word*, according to this Father ? The *Word* is the Holy Spirit, which united it self to Man, the *Word* is the Holy Spirit which put on Flesh : In short, 'tis the Holy Spirit which is the Christ of God. You'll say what hinders, but the second Person in the Trinity may have also the Name of the third ? That's pure Fancy ! Why should one shut ones eyes, when one sees as clear as the day, that St. *Cyprian* alludes to the miraculous Conception of our Saviour, and that these

sublime Expressions of that Father have no other Foundation but that Mystery ?

As for what *Lactantius* affords us, I hope his Authority will not be contested with me in the decision of a Point, wherein he does no more than confirm a Tradition, elsewhere well supported and followed. This pious Person having said in his Institutions, *lib. 4. c. 6. That God begat a Holy Spirit*, which he call'd his Son, he resumes this Discourse in the 12th chap. of the same Book, thus : " This Spirit of God, says he, coming " down from Heaven, made choice of " a pure and holy Virgin, into whose " Womb he infinuated himself ; and this " Virgin conceived, being full of the " Holy Spirit which embrac'd her.

That which *Lactantius* expresses by these Words, *descended on a Virgin*, can it be any other than that which St. *Luke* expresses in these, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee* ? But the Holy Ghost, of whom the Angel speaks, is the same, according to *Lactantius*, with that Holy Ghost which God begat, and which he called his Son. Dr. *Bull* tells us, the Fathers understood by the Holy Ghost, the Divine Nature of J. C. Very well ! but why so ? If not for this Cause, that J. C. had no other Divinity than that Spirit of Power and Holiness, which form'd his Body in the Womb of a Virgin. For in short, the Fathers speak after this manner, when they explain these words, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*, &c. or allude to them, and always with regard to his Birth of a Virgin. But the Holy Spirit in this Passage, *Luke 1. 35*, signifies most certainly that Power, which we *Trinitarians* call the third Person. And if the Fathers had a mind to find the second there, as is said, there's no knowing what the Words signify ; for it must be affirmed, that they have strangely mistaken the Scriptures, and in so unaccountable manner, as I may say, that there is no longer any certainty to be met with in their Writings. — All's in Confusion as in the ancient Chaos. There's

There's nothing whereby to discover the Names of the Divine Persons, nor by consequence the Persons themselves. Be it as it will, the Doctor will find it hard enough to apply his Solution to all the Arguments I am about to mention. And if he can do it, 'twill be no more difficult for him to find the Divinity of J. C. in all the Passages of the Gospel, where mention is made of the Holy Ghost. I hope also that at last he'll say, that when J. C. promis'd his Holy Spirit to his Apostles, he promis'd them his Divine Nature.

But I must beg my Reader's Patience a little longer, to see what Answer the Doctor will make against the last Authority I am going to alledg. And that's a Letter of the Council of *Sardis*, in the second Book of *Théodore's Hist. Eccles.* The Fathers there drew a Creed in three very distinct Articles, the first concerning the Father, the second the Son, and third Article the Holy Ghost. In the last, which is so expressly distinguished from that of the Son, they speak thus of the Incarnation by the Holy Ghost : "We believe also there is a Holy Spirit or Paraclet, which the Lord promis'd and sent. He did not suffer; but the Man whom he assumed or took from the Virgin Mary, he suffer'd, because he was capable of it; whereas God is immortal, τέτοις οὐ πένθει, &c. Is passus non est. Where one sees the Pronoun τέτοις agrees with Πένθει, which is a Neuter. Now of this Spirit the Fathers say he cannot suffer; but 'twas Man, whom he put on and took from the Virgin, that did suffer. This they speak, I say, of the Paraclet, whom they confess after the Father and the Son, and not of the Divine Nature of J. C. A Passage express and formal, which clearly proves these Doctors understood nothing else by the Holy Ghost, but that Power of God, whereof the Word is the Manifestation and the Operation, confounding the Spirit with the Word, and very distinctly assuring us, that the Paraclet

was incarnate. Is the Paraclet the Divine Nature of J. C. or the second Person of the Trinity? Here we'll wait the Doctor's Answer. *Valesius* not bearing with this Incongruity in the Council, had the Boldness to corrupt this Passage in his Version, by foistling in the word [Christ] for thus he has translated it : "He did not suffer, but the Man whom Christ put on. The Word [Christ] is not in the Text, which intirely relates to the Holy Ghost or Paraclet: In short, that Word ruines the whole sense of the Period, and strangely confounds all this third Article, which belongs only to the Holy Ghost, and is distinct from that concerning J. C. Both Translators and Copists are guilty of Falification in this particular.

Give me leave to affirm one thing, and that is, that the Antients have often distinguished the *Holy Spirit* from the *Power of the Highest*, whereof he is speaking in the same Text, calling the latter the *Word of God*, the *Son of God*, and saying only of the former, that he overshadowed the Virgin. Now even this shews, that by the Word, they understood nothing but the Power and the Operation of the Holy Spirit, which is the same thing with the Power and Operation of the Highest. The *Holy Spirit* signifying the *Substance*, and the *Power* of the Highest signifying the *Operation*; it follows, that the *Word*, which is the Power of the Highest, according to the Fathers, is not otherwise distinguished from the [Holy Spirit] than as the *Operation* is distinguished from its *Subject*.

We may conclude therefore from Proofs so very evident, that the Antients who have deified J. C. had no other ground for their Theology, but the Birth of J. C. of a Virgin by the Holy Ghost; that by the *Word* and the *Son of God*, they always understood this miraculous *Operation*; and that they never advanced any higher (in their Discourses) towards that, which is called an *eternal Generation*.

## C H A P. XII.

*An Account of the Foundation of the Allegorical Theology of the Fathers, concerning the Word and the Holy Spirit.*

I dare assure my Reader, that I can shew him the very Foundation of this Allegorical Theology. 'Tis known that the Fathers imitated the Gnosticks in many things, and particularly in the way of *Allegory* and *Contemplation*. But 'twas *Mark the Valentinian*, as we are inform'd by *Irenaeus*, lib. 1. cap. 12. who was the Author of the Allegorical Exposition on the Birth of *J. C.* that is, the first who elevated it to a sense of Contemplation and Mystery. He makes a *Quaternity* of the *Man* and the *Church*, which are the first Pair; and of the *Word* and *Life*, which are the second Pair. But what sort of Theology does he couch under this Enigma or Allegory? Why nothing less than the wonderful Conception of *J. C.* "The *Man*, says he, is the *Power of the Highest*, because that acted instead of the *Man*. "The *Church* is the *Holy Virgin*, because she held the place of the *Church*. The *Angel Gabriel* was instead of the *Word*, and the *Holy Spirit* instead of *Life*. Nothing can better convince us of the Allegory us'd by the *Valentinians*, than this Passage, in which the *Angel* is the *Word*, and the *Spirit* is the *Life*; the *Power of the Highest* is instead of the *Man*, and the *Virgin* is instead of the *Church*. I might also have produc'd this Passage for a Proof, when I was arguing this Point; but I have reserv'd it on purpose for this place, to shew that the whole Mystery of the *Word* reduces it self to the miraculous Conception of our *Saviour*, upon which both the *Heresicks* and the *Orthodox* have equally allegorized, each taking his Flight as his Contemplation led him on: And this is

that famous Theology so much extolled by the Fathers.

I know most of them, being entangled with their *Platonism*, have mighty entangled the first and ancient Ideas of this matter. But I know also, that before they came to make two *Hypostases* of the *Word* and the *Holy Spirit*, they were terribly perplexed about the latter, and could not tell what to do. Hence it was, without doubt, that they so long delayed the deifying [of the *Holy Ghost*] The Council of *Nice* has not at all touched upon its Divinity. So far were they from it, and the *Holy Ghost* made so small a Figure at that time, that some Fathers of the Council made no difficulty to give its place to the *Blessed Virgin*, by making her the third Person in the Trinity. Of which we are informed by *Elmacinus* and *Patricides*, in *Hotting. Orient. Hist. lib. 2. p. 227.* The Council of *Constantinople* durst not speak openly upon the point: And in *S. Basil's* time, there was a little Shiness in calling the *Holy Ghost* directly and formally *God*. 'Tis worth our regard what *Petavius*, *de Trinit. lib. 2. c. 7. §. 2.* says hereupon: "The Catholic Church, says he, accommo-  
" dating it self, for prudential Reasons,  
" to human Frailty, came not to the  
" full Profession of some Points, but  
" by little and little, and by degrees.  
" For it did not define nor pronounce  
" any thing in express Terms a-  
" bout the Deity of the *Holy Ghost*,  
" during the four first Ages very near.  
" 'Tis certain *Gregory Naz.* *Orat. 20. & Ep. 26.* excuses the Conduct of *S. Basil*, who, tho he was right in his Opinion of the Deity of the *Holy Ghost*,

" Ghost, would not however for Peace-sake, call it God openly and expressly, " because he knew there were many, " otherwise good Catholicks, who would " be offended if that Name should be " given to the Holy Ghost, that being " not ordinarily and publickly done a- " mong the Catholicks till after the se- " cond General Council, held in 381. Which is as much as to say, that at last, Time and Custom had placed the Holy Ghost in the Number of the Gods.

Good God ! almost four intire Centuries of the Church, which were the brightest and the purest, did determine nothing about the Deity of the Holy Ghost : just before the end of the 4th, they durst not speak of it but shily, for fear of offending the very Orthodox themselves. Where was then the Trinity ? Was the Tradition then lost ? What, that of the Orthodox and the Catholicks, who rejected or at least were offended at an Article so fundamental ? What greater Crime could Hereticks have been guilty of ? Whence came it that the third Person was admitted so very late ? Prudence, they tell us, would have the Notion conceal'd for a time. But why was not that of the second Person concealed too ? Are there not the same prudential Reasons for that too ? I think I perceive the difference of the case. The third was not known to the Platonic Fathers themselves, but in a very confused manner, and was not by the greatest part of them held for any other than a Creature. The Second was in high esteem with all the Platonic Party, deified by the whole Sect, the Favourite Notion, and principal Machine of the System. 'Twas easy to introduce this among the Gods of their Christian Religion, which at that time was modell'd according to Plato's Notions. But for the third, which was not so much in favour, 'twas difficult to admit it into that Rank, without great Address and Precaution. In the mean time, their over-cautiousness has prov'd a Disadvantage

to both ; the third interferes with the second, who should have been produc'd at the same time with his Brother, or both eternally concealed : for if the third cannot defend it self, what will become of the second, which is his elder Brother ? He is not of better blood, nor of a nobler Stock.

Can we doubt, after such convincing Proofs of the ancient Tradition, but by the Virgin Church (whereof Hegesippus speaks, in Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 32.) this ancient Nazarene meant the Church of the Circumcision, which had not yet imbibed Platonism, as by the Seduction of Error, and Science falsely so called, that had in Birth under Adrian's Reign, he meant the Platonizing Doctrine of the Gnostics, which was then brought into the Church ? 'Twas Philosophy that entirely ruin'd the true Religion, as the Apostles had foretold. In short, Valerius observes upon the Passage I shall by and by cite out of Eusebius, that this Historian too much extends the words of Hegesippus, ascribing thro Mistake to the Universal Church, what Hegesippus spoke only of the Church of Jerusalem et Judea. But Hegesippus his being so particular is remarkable. He would have us observe by it, that fatal Epoch, when the Nazarene Christian Bishops were succeeded by the Gentiles, and by that means Platonism came in the room of that pure and unmixt Truth, which St. James his Successors had preached, which happened exactly in the Reign of Adrian, that is, when the Jews were driven out of Judea, and the Christians of the Circumcision with them. Sulpitius Severus in his Hist. l. 2. c. 45. had reason to say ; the Christian Faith (which according to him is the Platonizing Doctrine) drew great advantages from this Dispersion. He would have said, that the Nazarenes then ceasing the Observation of the legal Ceremonies, made no further scruple to unite with the Gentile Church. But this is not all, the greatest advantage that accrued to the

the Gentile Church, was, that *Platonism* meeting no longer with any Opposition from the Primitive Faith, which the *Nazarenes* had inviolably preserv'd, it spread far and wide, and like an Inundation overspread the whole Church, nor excepting that of *Jerusalem*, that ancient Repository of the Apostolick Tradition, which then lost its Simplicity and Virginity, as *Hegeissippus* expresses it. 'Twas at this time the Gentiles in the Person of Pope *Vigil*, rose up against the Christians of the Circumcision, and oppres'd 'em, by taking from 'em an Apostolick Tradition touching the Day when the Passover was to be celebrated. And if they could wrest from 'em this Tradition in a point of mere Practice, it was more easy to strip 'em of a Tradition in a point of Doctrine, concerning the Nature and Person of Jesus Christ, the former being much more easily retained than the latter. There must have been a great noise and hurly-burly to alter the former; whereas for the latter, 'twas enough if they took the method of explaining and illustrating, or pretended an accommodation to a Sense more noble and profound. 'Tis of this Innovation, attended with Tyranny, that the *Artemonites* complain, as *Euseb.* tells us, *Hist. Eccles. lib. 5. c. 28.* Their Complaint was, that their Doctrine, which was the same Truth that the Antients and Apostles had taught, and which had been preserved intire till the time of Pope *Vigil*, was corrupted under *Zephirin* his Successor. The *Anonymous*, who relates this, endeavours to confute 'em, by alledging Authors who liv'd before *Vigil*, and had ascrib'd Divinity to Jesus Christ, or had called him God: But I have demonstrated that this Theology of the Antients is grounded only upon the *Birth of our Saviour of a Virgin by the Holy Ghost*; and does by no means go so far as the *Platonick Notion* of his Generation. The first of these the *Artemonites* did not disown, for they believ'd Jesus Christ to be the Son of God by *Mary*. If the *Anonymous* would prove

from the Antients against the *Artemonites*, that Jesus Christ was God's Son begotten before all Ages, how comes it to pass, that he finds no antienter a Patron of his *Platonizing* Opinion, than *Justin Martyr*, who wrote after the fatal *Ephesia*, when the Succession of the *Nazarene* Bishops ended, and after the rise of the first *Gnosticism*, *Basilides* and *Valentinus*, &c. that is, after the Church had lost its Virgin Purity, and the *Gnostick* Opinions had corrupted the antient Theology?

The Authorities of his date are to be suspected. Why does he not ascend as high as *Barnabas*, *Hermas*, *Clemens Romanus*, and *Polycarp*? Would he have wanted the Honour of having these *Apostolick Men* for his Vouchers, if he had thought 'em opposite to *Artemon*? He does not go so far back as *Ignatius*; which makes it to be suspected, either that he did not believe *Ignatius* favour'd the Opinion of Christ's Pre-existence, or that the Epistles of that Father were a Forgery after his time. 'Tis to the first and earliest Antiquity we must ascend: *Artemon* will be in the right, if he rejects those latter Testimonies, and produces more antient ones for his own Doctrine. But the *Anonymous* cites Scripture, and so does *Artemon* appeal to it, alledging that his Doctrine is the same Truth that the Apostles had taught: That therefore is the thing in question. We shall see hereafter who has the most reason to appeal to this most Primitive Authority; for I intend to examine in what sense the Son of God is there deify'd.

The *Anonymous* makes another small attack upon the *Artemonites*, for their seeming to insinuate, that *Vigil* was not against their Doctrine, but that *Zephirin* was the first that did persecute it. I will not repeat here what I have remark'd touching the deposing of *Theodotus*, that *Vigil* might excommunicate him as an *Ebionite*, without breaking Communion with the *Artemonites*, who maintained the Orthodox Doctrine of the miraculous

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Conception of our Saviour. 'Tis sufficient at present to shew, that the Words of *Artemon* may fairly signify, that *Vidor* was the first who attack'd the Apostolick Faith, but that *Zephirin* entirely destroy'd it. So far is *Artemon* from ranking *Vidor* among those who preserv'd the Truth intire, that he seems to say on the contrary, that he began, and *Zephirin* completed its Ruin. *Vidor* began, by excommunicating one single Christian, *Theodosius*; and certainly *Zephirin* concluded by excommunicating the whole Orthodox Church, or all the other Great Men who joined with *Artemon* in the defense of expiring Truth; as the *Fable* concerning their Bp *Natalis*, that comes after, inclines one to think. I call it a *Fable*, for nothing is more extravagant, than to talk of Angels whipping and scourging the *Artemonite* Bishop into the bosom of the Church. How! were the Angels the first who made Converts by Dragooning? Is there any thing that can more discredit this Romance of the *Anonymous*? Another Story, that *Eusebius* has tack'd to this, is, when he makes the *Anonymous* say, that *Theodosius* was the first Author of the Error ascrib'd to him, which is false; take his Heresy, in what sense you please.

Dr. *Bull* endeavours to cover the Reputation of *Eusebius* by a certain wretched distinction; but he does not observe that *Eusebius* contradicts him, for he goes on to say in the same Book, that *Theodosius* was the first whom *Vidor* excommunicated; which supposes that he was the first who suffer'd for his adherence to this Doctrine, but not the first who published it. If he was the first Martyr for it, it does not follow that he was the first Author of it. 'Tis highly probable, that the great noise of the Excommunication of *Theodosius*, upon the very account that this Persecution was new and unheard of, made him pass in after-times for the very Author of that Opinion for which he was persecuted. Not to insist on it at present, that *Euse-*

*bis* makes no scruple a little to corrupt the Story at all times, when he can by that Fraud give the Air of Antiquity to his *Platonick Logos*, or of Novelty to the opposite Doctrine, which he hated with all his heart; he has been catcht in so many other Places, that the Presumptions against him cannot but be very violent. For instance, where he makes *Josephus* say, that on the Day of Christ's Passion, a Voice was heard in the Temple of Jerusalem, saying, *Let us go hence*. And witness another Passage, where he makes the same *Josephus* say (*Euseb. Hist. Ecc.* lib. 2. c. 9.) that 'twas an Angel who appear'd over the Head of *Herod Agrippa*; whereas *Josephus* expressly says, it was an *Owl*. One plainly discerns where the pious Fraud lies; he would not have it be thought that the Jewish Historian did not agree with St. *Luke*.

Thus it appears, in spite of all the Efforts of *Eusebius*, that 'twas in the time of *Vidor* and *Zephirin* that the pure Faith of the first Christians fell with the Church of the *Nazarens*, which from that time have often pass'd for *Heretics*. The new Succession of *Gentile Bishops* (*Euseb. lib. 4. c. 5.*) began with one *Mark*, and *Platonius* enter'd into the Church with the new Bishops. *Saturninus*, *Basilides*, and the whole Clas of the *Gnosticks*, made a mighty progres afterwards, under colour of discovering Secrets unknown heretofore to the Church. About the same time *Carpocrates* his Heresy was broach'd, another *Mystician*. To speak the truth, the infamous Practices of these Pretenders to Illumination were not long born withal in the Church: Human Nature alone, without the Succours of Religion, knew how to quit it self of it in a short time. But as for their Philosophy, the Church managed that to her purpose: after some sifting and refining, 'twas adjusted to the more specious part of her Religion, for the support of her new Opinions; which being pure Speculations, the Affections were not so far concern'd about 'em, as

to take notice of their *Repugnancy*: And the Mind, which is naturally desirous of Knowledge, found its account in 'em; and the natural Veneration Men have for Mystery, and for every thing they do not comprehend, had the greatest Stroke in

this matter, and gained the Point. So one sees how by insensible Methods and Degrees, the *Gospel*, which is a *Doctrine purely practical*, was exchanged for *Contemplation, Mystery and Fanaticism*.

## C H A P. XIII.

*An Account of the first Christians, call'd Nazarens.*

**T**O conclude, it may not be amiss to give my Readers an Idea of the first Christians, called *Nazarens*. There were two sorts of 'em, as many of the Fathers, and some of the Moderns have observ'd: The former improperly so called, and more properly *Ebionites*; for they believ'd Jesus Christ to have been the Son of *Joseph*, and obliged the *Gentiles* to keep the Law of *Moses*. Among these, such who held Jesus to be the *Christ*, were tolerated, and accounted *Christians*; but the others had not that Character, because they made *Moses*'s Law necessary to Salvation, and held Jesus for no more than a just *Man*, or a *Prophet*, who suffer'd in the Cause of Righteousness and Truth: They would not have the Benefits of his Mission to extend to the *Gentiles*; or in a word, that he was the *promis'd Messiah*, and had any Power in Heaven. Some believed he was not truly rais'd from the Dead; others believed he was, that he might receive the Reward of a Good Man, but not that he might be made Lord of the World: They could not be persuaded to think that Jesus, who was come in the Flesh, that is, in so low and mean a Condition, could be the glorious *Messiah*, the *Christ*, so often promis'd by the Prophets.

The other sort of *Nazarens*, properly so called, were the Believers of *Judea*, to whom that Name was given, as the Name [*Christian*] was to the Gentile

*Proselytes*. These believ'd Jesus Christ to be born of a Virgin by the Holy Ghost, and in this Sense they called him the *Son of God*: and not only so, but they confess'd this Son of God to be the *Christ*. For 'tis thus the Words of St. *Austin* must be understood (*de Hares. c. 9.*) and not as Dr. *Bull* expounds 'em (*Judic. Eccles. p. 47.*) by a *Hysteron Proteron*,<sup>47</sup> in this manner, that *the Christ was the Son of God*, that is, according to him, a Son begotten before all Ages. *Danau*, a better Critick than he, made no blunder in his Exposition of St. *Austin's* Words: *The Nazarens*, says he, believ'd that *Jesus the Son of Mary, was the Christ*; and 'tis certain the Words ought to be taken in this Sense. (*Dei filium confitentur Nazarei esse Christum*, says the Father.) In short, they did not oblige the *Gentiles* to observe the Law, which they thought themselves ought to keep, as being *Jews* by birth; but they afterward abandon'd it too, as an Obligation that ceas'd as soon as they were driven out of *Judea* by the Emperor *Adrian*.

There is a great confusion among Ecclesiastical Writers, in their Judgment of these *Nazarens*. Some look upon 'em as Hereticks, with others they pass for *Orthodox*. The latter Fathers, as *Epiphanius*, St. *Austin*, and *Theodore*, place 'em in their Lists of Hereticks; but the more ancient Fathers, as *Irenaeus* and *Tertullian*, have not set 'em down in that Catalogue. 'Tis easy to conjecture whence

whence this Disagreement comes. Sometimes they pas'd for Orthodox, 1st. Because their Opinion that Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin by the Holy Ghost, &c. being originally the Orthodox Faith, some Remains of that Tradition maintain'd their Honour for a time. 2ly. Because Eusebius, after Hegesippus, had given 'em this Testimony, that their *Faith was found*, as we have before shewn.

Now this Historian, who gave his Opinion of 'em according to his own Prejudices, mistaking their true Sentiments, has drawn other Platonizing Christians after him into the same Mistake. The Nazarens believ'd that by virtue of the miraculous Conception of our Saviour, God was truly his Father; and for this reason they give him the Title of the Son of God, and it may be, of God too sometimes. The Platonizing Christians suffered themselves to be amused with big Words, having their Minds pre-ingaged in Ideas they had put upon 'em beforehand; so that they were so far from treating the Nazarens as Hereticks, that they have often made 'em speak in the Platonick manner, always supposing thro prejudice, that whoever said these Words [Son of God] meant by 'em, a Son begotten before all Ages. But sometimes also they reckoned 'em Hereticks, either because they confounded 'em with the Ebionites, or because their Opinion, rightly understood, was look'd up on as Heretical, after Platonism prevail'd. When all thofe, in short, who went for the Divinity of Christ no farther than

*his Generation from God and the Virgin Mary*, and who refus'd to subscribe or assent to the Platonick Generation before all Ages; all such, I say, were no better treated than the Ebionites, who believed Christ to be the Son of Joseph; they were all anathematiz'd without hopes of absolution. 'Tis from this confusion of Ideas, that we meet with so much obscurity in the History of the Nazarens.

Dr. Bull, who knew not how to clear up this Perplexity, runs himself into greater Difficulties: He teases and fatigues himself to maintain his own Sentiments under the Expressions of the Nazarens, and to reconcile the irreconcileable Censures of the Platonizing Fathers about 'em. But what signifies all this ado? The truth is, nothing of his Platonism was in the least known to the Nazarens. All his Citations are grounded upon the equivocal Sense of these Words [the Son of God.] True it is, they went beyond the Ebionites, and believ'd Jesus Christ was more than a mere Man, because they believ'd him to be born of a Virgin by the Holy Ghost: Yet the Nazarens must be Hereticks, say the Doctor what he will, if they are to be try'd by his Platonick Faith: But they are also Orthodox, say others what they please, if they are examin'd by the Rule of Orthodoxy that prevail'd in the first Age of the Church, the Footsteps whereof have been preserv'd by some Writers in succeeding Ages, as I have already proved.